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THE

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THE

CLUBS OF LONDON;

WITH

ANECDOTES OF THEIR MEMBERS,

SKETCHES OF CHARACTER,

AND

CONVERSATIONS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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THE

CLUBS OF LONDON.

VOL. II.

THE

CLUBS OF LONDON,

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CLUBS OF LONDON.

THE BEEF-STEAK CLUB.

WHO has not heard of the Sublime Society of the Beef-Steaks? Of this Club, British in heart, character, and humour, a true conservatory of our national good-nature and mirth, I never met with an authentic account. Some antiquarians have confounded its ancient history with the Beef-Steaks Club mentioned in the Spectator, founded, it was said, by Tom Estcourt, the player, and of which Peg Woffington was the president. Nor let it be mistaken, as it sometimes is, for the

pseudo-club of modern origin, that has assumed its name. The real Beef-Steaks has nothing new about it. It has enjoyed, through a long chain of tradition, a corporate life, that never dies. The Sublime Society has its pedigree, its ancestry, its title-deeds. The gridiron of 1735, standing out in proud relief from the ceiling of its refectory, is, to this fraternity, what the Clarencieux, the rouge-dragons of Collins and Edmondson, are to the heraldic pride of our aristocracy. It is the real gridiron, on which its first steak was broiled. That eloquent emblem is engraved on the hearts and on the buttons of every member, with the no less eloquent motto that encircles it, BEEF AND LIBERTY.

As every thing in this Society breathes a spirit of antiquity, so every thing promises long duration. Its founders, in the provident spirit of wise legislators, infused into it a vitality that has preserved it through the giddy revolutions of taste, and the petulant caprices of fashion. Though composed of fleeting materials, its capital fund of humour, wit, and social glee, has been locked up, like property in mortmain. Fashions have passed

away, but not the fashion of the Beef-Steaks, which remains unsoiled and unchanged in the glossy freshness of its primæval character.

Do not, I beseech you, profane this venerable institution, by imagining a collection of greasy citizens devouring beef-steaks, whom common voracity draws together, and common satiety will disperse. On that despicable tenure, the flies of the shambles would be a Beef-Steak Club. But the princes, the nobles, the wits of the land, seated at a plenteous, but frugal board, and in equal brotherhood, keeping alive the old, in-bred good-nature of the better classes of the English people. Beef is, indeed, the grosser ligament of the union, its outward and tangible sign. But an ethereal spirit, an intellectual sympathy is there, to draw and cement kindred hearts to each other. It is the carnival of the soul; its unfettered commerce, not in verbose tortuous mazes of disquisition, but in all sorts of gladnesses, extracted from all sorts of things; a voyage of the spirits bound no where, with liberty to touch every where, and bringing home from every point of the compass, an unperishable cargo of inno-

cuous satire, and heart-stirring hilarities—undisturbed by one moment's spleen, or acerbity, or wounded self-love. It is

"The mirth which after no repenting draws;"

the mirth which goes home with you to your pillow, startles your wife in the watches of the night, with your involuntary laugh, as you are musing over the whim and fancy of the evening, and even endangers your cup of tea the next morning by the agitation of your fibres.

He who has passed a good day at the Beef-Steaks, and has not felt this sensation, may indeed "go in the catalogue" for a man; but, without calling for any more evidence, I would pronounce him anti-social in his composition. Poor old Johnson, many years the father of the Society, was so frequently visited with these reminiscences, that Mrs. Johnson began to throw out hints for a separate couch, till habit had reconciled her to the occasional interruptions of her slumbers. In short, the fun of Ben Johnson's Club, at the Mermaid, in Cornhill, as it is recorded by Beaumont, in his epistle to honest

Ben seems not to have surpassed that of the Beef-Steaks in degree and quality.

——— What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life; then, where there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past; wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly.

Nor is the history of the Beef-Steaks less remarkable than its spirit and character. Henry Rich was the founder. A word or two of this same Rich. He had the glory of first introducing Harlequin on our stage, and he played the part under the assumed name of Lun. All theatrical tradition bears testimony to his unequalled powers of gesticulation. He was, in one word, a finished mime. As his genius lay chiefly in pantomime, he devoted his time to the perfecting that branch of the drama, first at the little theatre in Lincoln's Inn, afterwards at Covent Garden, of which he became the manager. In the character of Harlequin, his signs and gestures are

said to have been as eloquent as words. Garrick, who attempted, after Rich's death, the Irish experiment of a *speaking* pantomime, thus alludes to Rich in a prologue :—

> When Lun appeared, with matchless art and whim,
> He gave the power of speech to every limb.
> Though masked and mute, conveyed his true intent,
> And told in frolic gestures what he meant:
> But now the motley coat, and sword of wood,
> Require a tongue to make them understood.

It was in the year 1735, that Rich was so industriously employed in this motley species of amusement. But he paid particular attention to the promptitude and certainty of the mechanism, on which the delightful vicissitude of the whole world of pantomime mainly depends; and to be quite assured of the effect, he painted on a smaller scale, in pasteboard, the scenes and contrivances afterwards exhibited on the stage. His ingenious models thus became a microcosm of those pleasing spectacles that gave our forefathers that honest John Bull-like delight, which the degenerate pantomimes of the modern theatre cannot administer. But pantomime then had a truer relish of its Italian origin; and, under Rich's le-

gislation, every thing was severely regulated. The clown, or Gracioso, was not permitted to do more than was set down for him. Gratuitous grins, superfluous tumbles, extempore kicks were subject to green-room penalties. Even Harlequin was restricted from those supplementary capers, those appoggiaturas of the feet, which he is too prone to indulge. The poetry of the heels was strictly regulated. Hence, in Rich's time, the perfection of those farces which are said to have breathed a festive atmosphere all around.

How I envy the generation who saw those jubilees of fun! That generation has, indeed, long mouldered in the grave; but fancy cannot help picturing the infantine and chubby faces of our ancestors, mantling with joy and merriment, and my young masters in full-drest suits, shaking their sides in the general diapason of laugh, that ran through the whole play-house, to the no small jeopardy of the unnatural load of peruke, which the tyranny of fashion inflicted on the heads.

Whilst Rich was thus employed, his atelier, a small room in the theatre, was almost as much frequented as Canova's or Thorwaldsen's

in our days. Every one seemed anxious to be admitted, to see him at his interesting labours. Amongst these were several men of rank and wit; for Rich's colloquial oddities were much relished. The celebrated Lord Peterborough, then somewhat advanced in years, Hogarth, Sir James Thornhill, &c. &c. were of the number. At these visits, he never intermitted his labours, nor his strain of facetious remark. Upon one occasion, accident having detained the Earl's coach later than usual, he found Rich's chit-chat so agreeable, that he was quite unconscious that it was two in the afternoon; when he observed the man of pantomime spreading a cloth, then coaxing his fire into a clear culinary flame, and proceeding with great gravity to cook his own beef-steak on his own gridiron. The steak sent up a most inviting incense, and my Lord could not resist Rich's invitation, to partake of it. A further supply was sent for; and a bottle or two of excellent wine from a neighbouring tavern, prolonged their discourse to a late hour. But so delighted was the old peer with his entertainment, that, on going away, he proposed renewing

it at the same place and hour on the Saturday following. He was punctual to his engagement, and brought with him three or four friends, "men of wit and pleasure about town," as Mr. Bayes would call them: and so truly festive was the meeting, that it was proposed that a Saturday's club should be held there, whilst the town remained full.

A sumptuary law, even at this early period of the Society, restricted the bill of fare to beef-steaks, and the beverage to port wine and punch.

Thus the corner-stone of the Sublime Society was laid. But the original gridiron upon which Rich had broiled his solitary steak, being insufficient in a short time for the supernumerary worshippers in the temple of Beef and Liberty, the relic was enshrined as one of the tutelary and household divinities of the Club. Fortunately, it escaped the fire which consumed Covent Garden a few years since, and now presents itself, encircled with its motto, and suspended from the ceiling to every eye, which can spare a wandering glance from the beef-steak smoking before it. Nor is there any doubt that the *religio loci*, the

sanctity of place, has been amongst the influences that have preserved the Club to so reverend an age. Upon this principle, its founders seem to have calculated, when they resolved that it should be held for ever in a theatre, the invariable tenure on which, unless in cases of inevitable necessity, it has ever subsisted.

In that fire, alas! perished the original archives of the Society. The lovers of wit and pleasantry have much to deplore in that loss, inasmuch as not only the names of many of the early members are irretrievably gone, but what is more to be regretted, some of their happiest effusions; for it was then customary to register in the weekly records, any thing of striking excellence that had been hit off in the course of the evening.

This, however, is certain, that the Beef-Steaks, from its foundation to the present hour, has been

——— native to famous wits
Or hospitable—

that as guests or members, persons distinguished for rank, and social and convivial powers, have, through successive generations, been seated at its festive board. Bubb Doddington, Aaron Hill,

Hoadley, the author of the Suspicious Husband, Leonidas Glover, are only a few names snatched from the slender traditions that remain of its first ages.

Of these, no one was more distinguished for the brilliancy of his parts, and for the variety and sweetness of his conversation, than Sir Peere Williams, a young gentleman of birth and fashion. He had made already several eloquent speeches in Parliament, and giving the most promising omens of future distinction. This ill-fated youth fell at the siege of Bellcisle. He went thither, it seems, not more from the spirit of military enterprize, than to fly from a hopeless attachment. His disappointment (the causes of it cannot now be traced) o'er-mastered his fine spirits, and rendered him careless of existence. In the recklessness of a desponding state of mind, he approached too near one of the enemy's sentinels, and was shot through the body.

Slight fragments only remain of the early history of the Society. Of its first members, each in his turn has been knocked about the mazzard by the sexton's spade. Then came the days of

Lord Sandwich, Wilkes, Bonnell Thornton, Arthur Murphy, Churchill, and Tickell, the author of the liveliest of hits, Anticipation. Descending nearer our own times, we find there the present King, when Prince of Wales,* the late Duke of Norfolk, Charles Morris, and others, the *delecta Danaum*, the pride and flower of modern London.

Nor is the Society's brightness yet obscured. I shall presently attempt a faint commemoration of a few of the luminaries that still shine at its board. But is it not a proud victory over time, that amid the dissolutions of the greatest confederations, and the crumbling ruin of states

* On Saturday, the 14th of May, the Prince of Wales was admitted a member of the Beef-Steak Club. His Royal Highness having signified his wish of belonging to that Society, and there not being a vacancy, it was proposed to make him an honorary member; but that being declined by His Royal Highness, it was agreed to increase the number from twenty-four to twenty-five, in consequence of which His Royal Highness was unanimously elected. The Beef-Steak Club has been instituted just fifty years, and consists of some of the most classical and sprightly wits in the kingdom.—*See Annual Register*, Vol. XXVII. for 1785.

and kingdoms, this cheerful fraternity has so long defied the common destroyer of man and his institutions? But look at their charter, and cease to admire.—It is BEEF AND LIBERTY. The spirit of the Club is its own most emphatically. Nothing foreign, borrowed, or adventitious. It is obvious that no antecedent rule or regulation could have formed such a Club. Good-humour, mirth, mutual forbearance, open-hearted communication, the postponement of every selfish feeling to the general hilarity and happiness; these can be produced by no rule or regulation. It should seem that the spirit of the Beef-Steaks, like that of the English constitution, resides in no especial maxim, but informs and animates the whole system—at once its parent and result—producing, and reproduced.

Yet, whether this happy effect has flowed from accident or design, or the felicitous combination of both, it is a soil and climate in which ill-humour cannot vegetate. Place a man there accursed with a peevish temper, some spoiled son of fortune, or of his mother; in that Society, take my word for it, he will be soon an altered

being, or he will assume the virtue he has not; a discipline which, not unfrequently, makes a man what he affects to be. In this respect, it has worked miracles far beyond Prince Hohenloe's; converting morose cynics into easy and placid companions; froward disputants into tranquil listeners. Not that it is often necessary to put this salutary process to the test; for every candidate must undergo a previous inquisition as to his temper and good sense, which, in fact, are synonimous; and, for this purpose, he must attend twice, or thrice, or oftener, if need be, when his patience in sustaining, and his smartness in repelling, the good-natured satire of the place, are minutely noted. In spite, however, of this ordeal, a waspish blockhead will now and then creep in. But woe to him when he is there! The fabled torments of poetry are a joke to what he has to go through. Ixion's wheel is only a cockney's velocipede; the stone of Sisyphus a mere game of bowls in the comparison. He must either withdraw altogether, or, involving himself within the integument of his natural dulness, sit and listen in silence.

Lord Sandwich's, Wilkes's, Churchill's, are generally quoted as the golden period of the Society. I am old enough to remember Arthur Murphy, and from him I have heard many anecdotes of it at that time, for he dwelt fondly on the pleasant nights he had passed at the Beef-Steaks. It must be remembered, that convivial societies then were less restrained in particular points than at present. Coarseness of expression was no objection to a witty saying, provided it *was* witty. It was at one of these Saturnalia that Lord Sandwich received Wilkes's answer to the indecent alternative he had put to him. "That depends," replied Wilkes, "upon this—whether I embrace your lordship's principles or your mistress." We cannot now detail the whole anecdote; it is, however, so well known, that a slight allusion will recall it. Churchill was a convivial, but a very intemperate companion. There was a short day-light interval betwixt the flatness of his unexcited spirits, and the confusion of positive inebriety: in that short interval Charles Churchill was radiant. Every thing he said told; it hit between wind and water. A person

of the name of Bradshaw was at that time a member of the Beef-Steaks. He was vain of being descended from the regicide of that name. He was one day on his favourite topic, boasting of his ancestor's patriotism, when Churchill exclaimed, "Ah, Bradshaw, don't crow! The Stuarts have been amply avenged for the loss of Charles's head, for you have not had a head in your whole family ever since." At another time, a gentleman happening to cough vehemently, from the distressing accident of something "going the wrong way," Churchill said to him, "If you are subject to it, I will tell you how to avoid it for the future." "How, how?" inquired the other. "Why," returned Charles, "you have only to put up a direction-post in your throat, and you may be sure that then every thing will go right."

Churchill was not long a member. He owed his introduction to Wilkes, but his irregularities were so gross that he ceased at length to be a welcome visitant; and having shamefully deserted his wife, whose conduct was irreproachable, his reception after that affair was such as

induced him to resign. It is not apparent for what reason, but he attributed the circumstance to Lord Sandwich, and the affront stimulated him to the satire which he wrote against that nobleman. It began thus—

"From his youth upwards to the present day,
When vices more than years have made him grey;
When riotous excess with wasteful hand,
Shakes life's frail glass, and hastes each ebbing sand;
Unmindful from what stock he drew his birth,
Untainted with one deed of real worth;
Lothario, holding honour at no price,
Folly to folly added, vice to vice,
Wrought sin with greediness, and courted shame
With greater zeal than good men seek for fame."

As a poet, Churchill was much over-rated. He has now sunk to his level. He has only now and then a vigorous masculine line to atone for a long series of prosaic ones. Johnson always maintained him to be a shallow fellow. His popularity was never of an enviable kind. His satire administered to the bad feelings of the heart, and was read by those chiefly who love to see worth depreciated, and distinctions laid

low. He died at Bologne, during a visit to his friend Wilkes, then an exile, and was buried at Dover.

David Garrick was a great ornament of the Beef-Steaks. He had no slight tincture of vanity, and was fond of accusing himself, to use Lord Chesterfield's phrase, of the cardinal virtues. Having remarked at the Club that he had so large a mass of manuscript plays submitted to his perusal, that they were constantly liable to be mislaid, he observed, that unpleasant as it was to reject an author's piece, it was an affront to the poor devil's feelings if it could not be instantly found; and that for this reason he made a point of ticketting and labelling the play that was to be returned, that it might be forthcoming at a moment's notice. "A fig for your hypocrisy!" exclaimed Murphy, across the table. "You know, Davy, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it." "Yes," replied Garrick; "but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value, for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead."

On one occasion, Garrick dined in the Beef-Steak room at Covent Garden, ready dressed in character for the part of Ranger, which he was to perform the same night at the other theatre. Ranger appears in the opening of the comedy, and as the curtain was not drawn up at the usual time, the audience began to manifest considerable impatience, for Garrick had not yet arrived. A call-boy was instantly dispatched for him, but he was unfortunately retarded by a line of carriages that blocked up the whole of Russell Street, which it was necessary for him to cross. This protracted still further the commencement of the piece, and the house evinced considerable dissatisfaction, with cries of "Manager, manager!" When Garrick, at length, reached the green-room, he found Dr. Ford, one of the patentees, pacing backwards and forwards in great agitation. The moment the Doctor saw him, he addressed him, in a strong tone of rebuke, "I think, David, considering the stake *you* and I have in *this* theatre, you might pay more attention to its business." "True, my good friend," returned Garrick, "I should have been in good time, but

I was thinking of my *steak* in the other." The appearance of their favourite soon pacified the audience, and Garrick went through the character with more vivacity than ever.

It is well known that Wilkes did not intend his obnoxious Essay on Woman for publication. It came into the hands of Lord Halifax, then Secretary of State, in consequence of the general seizure of all Wilkes's papers, by virtue of a general warrant; and the House of Lords proceeded against it as a breach of privilege, part of it being a satirical attack upon Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. Wilkes, having privately printed it for circulation among his friends, presented a copy of it to the Beef-Steaks. To his great surprise, however, the grossness of its language, and the unblushing blasphemy that pervaded it, excited the disgust of every member, and it was unanimously rejected. Wilkes did not visit the Club afterwards; but, when he left the kingdom, he was made an honorary member, as a compliment justly due to the wit, spirit, and humour which had so long delighted the table.

Arthur Murphy gave me sketches of several

characters, who flourished at the Beef-Steaks about that period; some of them were most amusing originals. There was a Serjeant Prime, who furnished an unfailing flow of merriment. Several ludicrous adventures, which, if they did not actually happen, were at least ascribed to the little lawyer, were sure to find at the Beef-Steaks some waggish historian to recount them. To one incident Murphy pledged his own veracity. The Serjeant had arranged with another lawyer, who was also of a very diminutive size, to travel together on horseback the ensuing spring circuit. This lawyer generally went by the name of Frog Morgan, from his having so repeatedly cited in an argument before the King's Bench, Croke Elizabeth, Croke James, Croke Charles,* that the whole bar were convulsed with laughter. Another anecdote of him was current in Westminster Hall. Before he was much known at the bar, he had commenced an argument, but Lord Mansfield, not aware of his stature, called upon him

* This reporter lived in those three reigns; and his reports are always cited with the names of the reign when the decisions took place.

repeatedly "to get up," conceiving that he was not addressing the court standing. "My Lord, I am up," screamed out Frog Morgan, "and I have been up this ten minutes." But to my anecdote: Serjeant Prime, having hired a steady animal, set out on the Norfolk circuit with his friend Morgan; and, for the first week, the horse performed his part of the contract with a gravity not unbecoming the coif. But the stable-keeper had provided the Serjeant with a steed of a certain description, a circumstance of which Prime had no suspicion; and Frog Morgan, being mounted on a mare, the Serjeant's charger, one fine spring morning, lost sight of his decorum, and approached his companion with a familiarity that surprised and alarmed the two horsemen, equally unconscious of the sex of their respective horses. The point, however, was put out of doubt by an assault, which threw off poor Prime, and almost terminated in the annihilation of little Morgan, who had no power to dismount. Wilkes took a malicious pleasure in relating this adventure at the Beef-Steaks. When the Serjeant perceived that

Wilkes was about to tell it, he exclaimed, "For God's sake, Mr. Alderman, leave off your *horse-play* raillery."

Arthur Murphy, when he recounted to me these and many other anecdotes of the Beef-Steaks, was residing at Hammersmith, and living upon a small income, chiefly derived from the profits of a commission of bankrupts, and from the copy-right of his translation of Tacitus. He was originally at the bar, but the law, a jealous mistress, that will endure no rival, had forsaken him as soon as he devoted himself to dramatic literature. He was then old, but his memory was singularly retentive. No man had a more ample knowledge of the world, or abounded more agreeably in the chit-chat, which a knowledge of the world supplies. He went the same circuit with this Serjeant Prime, and nothing, Murphy assured me, could be more distressing than the length and drowsiness of the little man's speeches. Bench, bar, jurors, attornies, all felt their soporific effect;—even the javelin-men were observed nodding. A counsel, getting up to reply to him,

began, "Gentlemen, the long speech of the learned Serjeant"—"I beg your pardon, Sir," interrupted Mr. Justice Nares, "you might say the long *soliloquy* of the learned Serjeant, for my brother Prime has been talking an hour to himself."

At the circuit-table, there is sometimes held a court for the trial of professional irregularities; and conviction is generally followed by a fine, which is spent in wine for the benefit of the mess. It was resolved to try Prime for the length and drowsiness of his speeches; and a somewhat serious accident furnished an apt occasion for the joke. An ejectment cause at Huntingford had lasted the whole day; and being a matter of much expectation, the court was exceedingly hot and crowded. In the middle of a three hours' speech, in which Prime was then addressing the jury, a poor lad, who had seated himself on a beam that went across the roof, fell fast asleep, and came tumbling down among the crowd below. He escaped with a few bruises, but several persons were much hurt. This circumstance was pressed

into the aggravation of the case made out against the Serjeant, who was fined three dozen of wine, which he paid with great good humour.

Arthur Murphy considered an evening passed at the Beef-Steaks, to be the consummation of social enjoyment. Many years afterwards, a friend introduced me to that festive board, nor was I insensible to sundry whisperings of ambition, that hinted to me how delightful a thing it must be to be enrolled among its members. Mingay was the person who took me, and I think it was in the year 1799.

I do not recollect all who were present on that day, but I remarked particularly John Kemble, Cobb of the India House, His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, Sir John Cox Hippisley, Charles Morris, Ferguson of Aberdeen, and his Grace of Norfolk. This nobleman took the chair when the cloth was removed. It is a place of dignity, elevated some steps above the table, and decorated with the various insignia of the Society; amongst which was suspended the identical small cocked-hat in which Garrick used to play the part of Ranger. As soon as the clock strikes five, a

curtain draws up, discovering the kitchen, in which the cooks are dimly seen plying their several offices, through a sort of grating, with this appropriate motto from Macbeth inscribed over it:—

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly."

But the steaks themselves;—they were of the highest order, and I can never forget the good will with which they were devoured. In this respect, no one surpassed the Duke of Norfolk. He was *totus in illis*. Eyes, hands, mouth, were all intensely exercised; not a faculty played the deserter. His appetite literally grew by what it fed on. Two or three succeeding steaks, fragrant from the gridiron, rapidly vanished. In my simplicity, I thought that his labours were over. I was deceived, for I observed him rubbing a clean plate with a shalot, to prepare it for the reception of another.

A pause of ten minutes ensued, and his Grace rested upon his knife and fork; but it was only a pause, and I found that there was a good reason

for it. Like the epic, a rump of beef has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The palate of an experienced beef-steaker can discern all its progressive varieties, from the first cut to the last; and he is a mere tyro at the business, who does not know, that towards the middle there lurks a fifth essence, the perfect ideal of tenderness and flavour. Epicurism itself, in its fanciful combinations of culinary excellence, never dreamed of any thing surpassing it. For this cut, the Duke had wisely tarried, and for this he re-collected his forces. At last he desisted, but more I thought from fatigue than satiety; *lassatus, non satiatus.* I need not hint, that powerful irrigations of port encouraged and relieved at intervals the organs engaged in this severe duty.

Nor could I help admiring that his Grace, proverbially an idolater of the table, should have dined with such perfect complacency upon beef-steaks;—he whose eyes and appetite roved every day amidst the rich variety of a ducal banquet, to which ocean, earth, and air, paid their choicest contingents. His palate, I thought, would sigh as in captivity for the range in which it was wont

to expatiate, A member, who sate next me, remarked, that in beef-steaks there was considerable variety, and he had seen the most finished gourmands about the town quite delighted with the simple repast of the Society. But with regard to the Duke of Norfolk, he hinted, that it was his custom, on a beef-steak day, to eat a preliminary dish of fish in his own especial box at the Piazza, and then adjourn time enough for the beef-steaks. He added also, and I heartily concurred in his remark, that a mere dish of fish could make no more difference to the iron digestion of his Grace, than a tenpenny nail, more or less, in that of an ostrich. After dinner, the Duke was ceremoniously ushered to the chair, and invested with an orange-coloured ribbon, to which a silver medal, in the form of a gridiron, was appended. In the chair, he comported himself with great urbanity and good humour. On common occasions, the president is the target, at which all the jests and witticisms of the table are fired. On this, the fire was moderate; for though a characteristic equality reigns at the Beef-Steaks, the influences of rank and station are felt there, as they are in

every society composed of English gentlemen; and a courtesy stole insensibly upon those, who at other times were the most merciless assailants on the chair. I observed then, and I afterwards found my observation confirmed, that the Duke's conversation was various, embracing a large circle of anecdote, and displaying much of the terseness of phrase, and accuracy of thinking, familiar to men who have combined much experience with considerable reading. I was astonished to see how little effect the sturdy port wine of the Society produced on his adamantine constitution; for the same abhorrence of a vacuum, which had disposed him to do such ample justice to his dinner, showed itself no less in his unflinching devotion to the bottle.

Charles Morris, the bard of the Club, sung one or two excellent songs, of his own composition, the very essence of convivial mirth and fancy; and, at nine o'clock, the Duke of Norfolk quitted the chair, and Sir John Hippisley was called to that unenviable dignity. Poor man, he had a terrible time of it. A storm of "arrowy sleet and iron shower" whistled from all points in his

ears. All the rules of civilized warfare seemed to have been suspended; even the new members tried their first timid essays upon the Baronet. It consoled me, however, to hear that no man was more prompt to attack others than Sir John. He was evidently disconcerted, but he sustained it with great patience. I afterwards learned that he quitted the Society in consequence of an odd adventure, which really happened to him; and which, being related with malicious fidelity by one of the wags at the Beef-Steaks, raised a shout of laughter at his expense.

Sir John was an intelligent man, though not of the highest rank of intellect. Windham used to say of him, that he was very *near* being a a clever man. He was fond of business, and, having no employment of his own, was in the habit of entering with warm interest into the affairs of others, which he instinctively considered as his own. His insatiable curiosity led him into several singular perplexities. But his over-ruling passion was that of visiting remarkable criminals, and obtaining their stories from their own lips. A murder had been committed

by one Patch upon a Mr. Bligh, of Deptford; the proofs against him were merely circumstantial, but they cohered so remarkably, that the inference of his guilt was almost irresistible. The case excited considerable attention, but many well-disposed persons remained in that state of doubt concerning it, which is intolerably painful, when the life of a human being is in jeopardy.

Amongst others, Sir John felt much anxiety on the subject, and thought that it could only be relieved by the culprit's confession. For this end, he importuned the poor wretch incessantly, but in vain. Patch persisted in asserting his innocence, till, wearied with Hippisley's applications, he assured the Baronet, that he would reveal to him on the scaffold all that he knew of Mr. Bligh's death. Flattered with being made the depository of this mysterious communication, Sir John mounted the drop with Patch, and was seen for some minutes in close conference with him. It happened, that a simple old woman from the country was in the crowd assembled at the execution. Her eyes, intent upon the awful scene, were fixed, by an accidental misdirection,

upon Sir John, whom she mistook for the person who was about to be executed; and, not waiting till the criminal was actually turned off, she went away with the impression; the peculiar face, and, above all, the peculiar nose (a most miraculous organ) of Hippisley, being indelibly impressed on her memory. Not many days after, the good lady met Sir John in Cheapside. The certainty that it was Patch, seized her so forcibly, that she screamed loudly out to the passing crowd, "It's Patch, it's Patch; I saw him hanged; Christ deliver me!" and then fainted. When this incident was first related at the Beef-Steaks, a mock inquest was set on foot, to decide whether Sir John was Patch or not, and unanimously decided in the affirmative.

Ferguson of Aberdeen has been already mentioned. He was a singular character, and endued with a peculiar species of dry humour. In the House of Commons he was noted for a faculty, somewhat akin to that of ventriloquism. If a prosing speaker got on his legs about the expected hour of division, and the ordinary means, such as coughing, yawning, banging the green door,

proved ineffectual, Ferguson retired to a side gallery, squatted himself on a side bench, so as to be out of the speaker's eye, and sent forth such unearthly sounds, that, while they completely silenced the bore, no one could divine whence they proceeded. Of this Ferguson, they used to tell a characteristic anecdote.—During a debate in the beginning of the French war, he had retired to dine at Bellamy's, with two or three other members. As they were sitting over their wine, a messenger announced that Mr. Pitt was up. Instantly every one hurried down stairs to hear him. Ferguson, unwilling to quit his bottle, pressed the party to stay. "Why, Pitt is up," was the answer. "That's nothing to me," said Ferguson. "Let us have some more wine; for I am sure that it is the very thing that Pitt himself would do, if he were here, and they were to tell him that *I* was speaking."

The memory of this agreeable evening, so much out of the circle of common conviviality, sank deep within me. Ever and anon it visited me, amid the prosaic, dull festivities, we are

doomed to undergo in the common routine of life—those stale, vulgar communions, in which we herd rather than associate—where the mirth is without images, the jest without fancy, and the wine inebriates rather than gladdens. In the year 1812, however, I was honoured with the rare and enviable distinction of becoming a member of the Sublime Society. It was then domiciled, for a short time, at the Bedford, under the Piazza, the beautiful apartments at Arnold's theatre, where it now holds its meetings, not being quite finished. During this interval, I remarked some change of faces, but the heart, the spirit of the Club, is unchanged and the same. I was, of course, not unmindful of the ordeal I had to undergo; but one thing comforted and re-assured me.—Two or three had found their way there, who were far from being prodigies; one, in particular, put me quite at my ease. I said to myself, under this fellow's gabardine will I crawl when the storm hisses around me. When we are diffident of ourselves, how delightful it is to find somebody whom, in the most benighted state of our faculties, we are

sure to surpass! Yet this very animal, so providentially coming to my aid, and making me a sort of luminary—in the comparison, was the personification of self-complacency. It was his felicity to be convinced that his excellence lay in the very point where he was the most disqualified. For instance, his voice was bad, nay, it was distressing, and resembled, in all but vivacity, that of a male pig while they are qualifying *him* to become a singer. Yet he left off his dismal quavers with the conscious satisfaction of a first-rate performer. To satire, ridicule, sarcasm, he was quite inaccessible. How I envied the dog's beatitude! Nay, he had brought himself to believe that he was the most ample contributer to the wit and fancy of the Club, and that the happiest hits of the evening were his; like the idiot of Hierocles, who, as he walked along the Piræus, took every vessel that entered the harbour for his own. And herein I could not choose but admire the kind provisions of Nature, in whose benevolent scheme, qualities are so nicely distributed, and so evenly poised. Here was a creature, rioting in the dreams of his own

superiority, who, had he been aware how niggardly he had been dealt by in the distribution of human endowments, must have hanged himself in pure vexation. He was worse than useless lumber at the Beef-Steaks; he laid on it "like marl encumbering the soil, it could not fertilize." Of course the artillery of the table played profusely upon him; but this armed rhinoceros could feel nothing. "M***** is dead," said somebody to him, giving him a tap of the shoulder, finding him somewhat silent. "Dead," replied the other, "I am not dead, thank God." "Yes, M*****, you *are* dead," exclaimed Cobb. "I will prove it:—first, you are a dead weight to the Society; secondly, you are not *alive* to your own deficiencies." From this time, he was called the *late* Mr. M*****, and, not relishing the title, he withdrew in disgust. The spirit of the Club seemed to breathe more freely when this incubus was removed from it.

I wish my reader could see the Sublime Society at one of its festive sittings in the comfortable asylum prepared for the members at Arnold's theatre, when they were burnt away from Covent

Garden, and to which they migrated like Æneas and his Trojans, with all that they could save from Troy. Enough, however, was saved from that fire to keep up the historic interest that connects us with the ancient days of the Club. Still

Reliquias veterumque vides monumenta virorum,

and I really believe, allowing for the changes which in a long cycle of years will steal upon all that is human, that it is still the nurse of true English conviviality, the seat of that easy festivity, which equally quickens the fancy and warms the heart. It has, no doubt, somewhat declined from the era when Wilkes, Lord Sandwich, Thornton, the elder Colman, Leonidas Glover, and Churchill, assembled at its board. But even at that Augustan period, its present character was quaintly sketched by Tom Warton, who travelled from Oxford merely to pass one day there. That best-natured and drollest of beings, being asked how he liked it, replied, "Very much, my boys! You are all to my mind. I know not how to describe you, but you seem to belong to the tribe of the Ὀι δουι κατε αδαμμοι (Hoi don't care a dammoi)."

The don't-care-a-d—n feeling still exists unquenchably among us; that freedom which, by mutual convention, is permitted to press closely on the limits of good breeding, but never to overleap them. Yet there was a period, not many years since (at my time of life we live but in retrospect) which I wish could be recalled. Had you but seen Cobb * there! It is now upwards of seven years that he has been taken from us, but the vacancy he has left in our hearts is not yet filled up.

Unimitated, inimitable Cobb! How shall I pourtray thee? I know how a cold-blooded limner would set about it. He would give a dry inventory of thy good qualities; but that his sky-blue diluted panegyric might not be taken for flattery, he would water it down to the flat insipidity of his own candour, with a remark in the puling tone of impartiality, that on the other hand—how hateful are these *per contra* credits—Cobb had faults. Faults! to be sure he had, but why remind us of them? Give me the man, who,

* Late secretary at the India House.

when he registers the amiable qualities of a departed friend, sees nothing more; and who scorns to mix a mawkish mixture of censure in the sparkling cup of reflection, whose incense curls gratefully up to the skies. I see no fault in a friend who is torn from my side. The memory of those whom death or absence has removed from us, is a mirror that reflects only what is good, and from which the vapour breathed by a censorious criticism instantly flies off." Poor Cobb's faults vanished with the last sigh that departed from his lips;—with that sigh they melted into the unstained, ethereal element, with which good spirits become blended. Of Cobb, I remember only the steady, the kind, the hospitable friend;—the host whose wine, as it ran to the brim to cheer you, borrowed new brightness from the brightest of countenances, that frowned only if you passed it by untasted;—the mirthful being, in whose society the hour of departure stole like a thief unsuspected upon you;—the man of the world, the least tainted with the suspicion and selfish indifference incident to those who have seen much of it, and who

learned" as he was "in human dealings," had extracted from that learning a forgiving and indulgent pity for human frailty. Is it not worth a pilgrimage barefooted from the remotest corners of the world, to scatter the fairest flowers which the earth nourishes in her bosom, on the shrine of an honest creature, whose whole life was good humour, good nature, and beneficence in action?

Cobb was an admirable beef-steaker, and played off a delightful pleasantry. The friendly satire and raillery of the Society, he took with incomparable temper. In the chair he sustained, and returned the fire with the greatest promptitude, and silenced his assailants one by one, as the shepherd in Spenser brushes off the "cloud of cumbrous gnats" that molested him. Cobb was the author of several dramatic pieces. His farce, called the First Floor, kept possession of the stage for many years. To some of his comic operas, particularly his Haunted Tower, and Siege of Belgrade, Storace set some of his finest music. His last, called Ramah Drûg,* was not successful.

* The scene was in Hindostan, and *Drûg*, or *Droog*, in the language of the country, means a hill-fort.

At the Beef-Steaks, an author, a dramatic author especially, is fair game. Once, when the Fescennine licence of the Club was running high against poor Cobb, his dramatic productions did not escape. "Cobb!" said Arnold, "what a misnomer it was to call your opera the Haunted Tower. Why, there was no *spirit* in it from beginning to end!" "Yes," exclaimed some other desperate punster (I cannot now recall who it was) "but Cobb gave one of his pieces the most appropriate title possible, by calling it Ramah Drûg; for it was literally *ramming a drug* down the public throat." "True," rejoined Cobb; "but it was a drug that evinced considerable power, for it operated on the public twenty nights in succession." "My good friend," said Arnold, triumphantly, "that was a proof of its weakness, if it took so long in working." "Arnold, you are right," retorted Cobb: in that respect, *your* play" (Arnold had brought out a play, which did not survive the first night) "had the advantage of mine; that was so powerful a drug, that it was thrown up as soon as it was taken!"

These good-humoured reciprocations never

produced the slightest misunderstanding; a rare felicity, seeing the unrestrained spirit of banter that reigns there: but in those who carried on this keen encounter, the elements were most propitiously blended. Arnold was a fellow of infinite jest. Beneath an exterior not polished to the last degree of refinement, there lurked not only the sterling qualities of the heart, but a rough, masculine understanding. He was a manly and ingenuous being; nor, according to my creed, is it any derogation from those qualities, that he worshipped good wine "without a drop of allaying Tiber in it;" for his honest face turned to the bottle with as true a devotion as the Mussulman's to Mecca. I have spoken of him in the past tense, for I have not seen him for many years. Alas! that it should be the only tense, in which we can speak of the few pleasures that are indulged to us!

I wish that I could worthily commemorate an illustrious member of the Sublime Society, then most assiduous in his attendance. But let me not injure the likeness, by colours too faint, and a pencil too timid to pourtray him; else I might

endëavour to sketch the kind, the benevolent, and unaffected virtues of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. And why should I echo that "whereof all England rings from side to side?" No man enters more cordially into the humour of the Club, the equality of its spirit, or its sharp but innocent encounters. Nor do I believe, that what is due to him as a prince and a gentleman, was ever overlooked in that Club, even in the most unrestrained moment of mirth. On his part, so true, so inbred is his own sense of dignity, that never by a look, or a word, or a supercilious retiring within himself, did he check the current of its honest gladness; but, on the contrary, he gave it fresh life and saliency as it ran murmuring by him.

But Charles Morris—can any one think of the Beef-Steaks without including thy reverend image in the picture? The faculties of man are not equal to an abstraction so metaphysical. For many, many years, during which several of man's autumnal generations have fallen, he has been faithful at his post. He is the bard of the Society, who, in the person of this her favourite

disciple, may still boast *non caret vate sacro*, for time has not yet struck this old deer of the forest. You should have seen him, as was his wont at the period I am speaking of, making the Society's punch, his ancient and rightful office. It was pleasing to see him at his laboratory at the side-board, stocked with the varied products that enter into the composition of that nectareous mixture; then smacking an elementary glass or two, and giving a significant nod, the fiat of its excellence; and what could exceed the extasy with which he filled the glasses that thronged around the bowl; joying over its mantling beauties with an artist's pride, and distributing the fascinating draught

"That flames and dances in its crystal bound."

Well has our laureate earned his wreath. At that table his best songs have been sung; for that table his best songs were written. His allegiance to the Beef-Steaks has been an undivided allegiance. Neither hail, nor shower, nor snow-storm have kept him away;—no engagement, no

invitation seduced him from it. I have seen him there "outwatching the bear" in his seventy-eighth year; for as yet Nature had given no signal of decay in frame or faculty; but you saw him in a green and vigorous old age, tripping mirthfully along the downhill of existence, without languor, or gout, or any of the penalties exacted by time for the mournful privilege of living. I never knew any man less infected with the vanity of being thought younger than he is: and so far from wiping any thing from the score, I am convinced, that by an amiable fraud, our old bard now and then posts in his ledger a year or two more than he ought to do. His face is still resplendent with cheerfulness. "Die when you will, Charles," said Curran to him, "you will die in your youth."

Charles, under his well-known appellation of Captain Morris, is now, perhaps, the sole surviving veteran of those who figured in convivial life forty years ago; and through life he has secured a degree of esteem which is rarely shared by the mere ministers of pleasure, who are for the most part forgot when the bowl is drained,

and the roar of the carousal has ceased. More than one generation has he seen drop from his side, of whom he might say, in the words of one of his best songs—

"If I've shortened their days, I have lengthened their nights."

A race of water-drinkers has succeeded, and the potations of those days (such is the more than Homeric degeneracy of our modern Bacchanals) cannot be comprehended by the οἷοι νυν ἀνδρες. A rabbit that casts its litter in six weeks might as well strive at the gestation of an elephant, as the *bon vivant* of the present day to carry off what his ancestors of that period could hide beneath their girdles. In the frolic days of Carlton House, Charles was often admitted to its happy circles. Nor was he afterwards forgotten by his royal patron, who never forgot the friends that cheered his lighter hours. Yes, the same bounty (let calumny say what it will) which has often warmed into life those whom the world had left to die, giving them only, with its wonted libe-

rality, the choice of the dunghill on which they rotted—that bounty was shed upon Charles Morris, at a season, too, when it was wanted: and for many years he has enjoyed from that princely hand a comfortable stipend. Our old bard appreciates it as he ought. It is a memorial which will never depart from him; the remembrance of it will sooth his latest moments.

It is equally due to the late Duke of Norfolk to remark, that our venerable minstrel was indebted to him for that snug Sabine retreat in which his old age is now pillowed; a charming spot near Dorking, embosomed amidst the gentle undulating elevations of Surrey. There, in a peaceful valley, whose sides are clothed with innumerous boughs, the little mansion of the bard peeps out coquettishly, as if too timid for display, yet unwilling to be concealed. There, in the calm evening of a various life, he may brood over its short and fallacious pleasures; there, a repentant proselyte to Nature, he may do her homage in her hallowed recesses—a meet penance for one, who, in the delirium of his heart, derided her worship, preferring, to her embowering shades and o'er-

arching groves, "the shady side of Pall Mall, and the grove of London chimneys."* There he may feel at last how well he has exchanged the roar of the midnight song for the mild whispers of the breeze, and the madrigal of the running brooks. There he may sigh for having once renounced them, and hope to be forgiven!

Who has not admired the lyric effusions of Charles Morris? But to judge of their effect, you should have heard him sing them at the Beef-Steaks. Voice, science, are of course out of the question; for these you would have had soul, expression, manner. To say that those songs are deficient in the higher graces of poetry is hypercritical nonsense. To maintain that they have neither the terseness, nor the chaste simplicity of Anacreon, is pedantry, of which a school-boy would be ashamed. But where will you find such after-dinner songs? They have all a negligence, an ease (the classical reader will call it αφελεια) which befits the social hour. They

* See the Town and Country Life; one of his earliest songs.

breathe the soul of conviviality; they cure all sadness, but despair; they make the poor man forget the lowliness of his fortunes, and the insolent contrast of upstart wealth to his own destitution;—for to him who is corroded by the enduring pang, the pang that never dies—a few minutes of oblivion are an age of enjoyment. Do not, I pray you, forget the spirit and briskness of the little anacreontic—

> When the fancy-stirring bowl
> Wakes the soul to pleasure,
> &c. &c. &c.

But do you remember his exquisite reasons for filling the glass again? That song tells you how much the logic of the table transcends the logic of the schools; it shows you how demonstratively the senses reason, how eloquently they plead their own cause.

There reigns in the Beef-Steaks, as I have hinted already, a brotherhood, a sentiment of equality. How you would laugh to see the junior member emerging from the cellar, with half-a-dozen bottles in a basket! I have seen Brougham

employed in this honourable diplomacy, and executing it with the correctness of a butler. The Duke of Leinster, in his turn, took the same duty. With regard to Brougham, at first sight you would not set him down as having a natural and prompt alacrity for the style of humour that prevails amongst us. But Brougham is an excellent member, and it is a remarkable instance of the peculiar influences of this peculiar Society on the human character. We took him just as the schools of philosophy, the bar, the senate had made him. Literary, forensic, and parliamentary habits are most intractable materials, you will say, to make a member of the Beef-Steaks. Yet no man has imbibed more of its spirit, and he enters into its occasional gladiatorship with the greatest glee.

I believe him to be a most sincere, benevolent being. As a public man, he is sometimes betrayed into acrimony; but it is when he is thwarted by mean impediments, or teazed with petty grovelling exceptions. But who would fetter by precise rules the generous impulses of our nature? or bind over a noble enthusiasm to its

good behaviour? Brougham is unquestionably a great man. How sublime was his attitude the other night, how lofty and commanding his elevation, when he rebuked Hume for putting his pounds, shillings, and pence, into the scale against the honour and faith of a nation, whose honour and faith have ever been the bulwarks of her greatness; and well did that rebuke illustrate the immeasurable distance between the moral proportions of an enlarged policy, and the paltry calculations of vulgar arithmetic. Nor shall I ever forget (it is now many years since) the manly reply that he made to Lord Ellenborough, who had animadverted coarsely upon his zeal in behalf of a defendant convicted of having published a book reflecting on Christianity. "My lord," said Brougham, "why am I thus identified with the opinions of my client? I appear here as an English advocate, with the privileges and the responsibility of that office; and no man shall call in question either my principles, or my conduct, in the discharge of it. It is not, assuredly, to those only who clamour out their faith from high places, that credit will be given for the sincerity

of their professions." From this time, the tone of that overbearing judge was considerably moderated towards Brougham, and the bar in general.

Brougham, as Johnson said of Dr. John Campbell, has grazed over the whole common of literature. Is it not strange, that the busy pursuits of his busy profession, should allow him time for the cultivation of studies, some of which are not germane, but many quite adverse to it? In a letter written by Sir Thomas Bodley to Lord Bacon,* when at the bar, there is a passage, which has often struck me as being applicable to Brougham. "I cannot choose but wonder, that, your expence of time considered in your public profession, which hath, in a manner, no acquaintance with scholarship or learning, you should have culled out the quintessence, and sucked up the sap of the chiefest kinds of learning." A Zoïlus, perhaps, would point out a peculiar fault in Brougham's eloquence;—namely, that he does not always know where to stop—that he overlooks the precise point, where a step too much is worse than falling off—that

* Bacon's Letters—Cabala.

delicate shadowy line at which degeneracy begins. He certainly is too redundant, not to say tedious; but he never enters into a debate without well knowing what it is about.'" He is not what they call a party man;—nor is it possible to make a party man of him. He is too ethereal a spirit to do the biddings of a party; too high-minded to adopt their animosities, or to follow their idolatries.

But the Beef-Steaks.—Whose is that pleasing, self-pleased countenance, on which there sleeps a serenity like that of the foremost of the crowd, who are listening to St. Paul in one of the fine cartoons of Raphael? In spite, however, of a dead calm of feature, the tongue of that worthy individual never knows repose. It has been going on at the same untired pace for more than an hour. It is Jack Richards, a well known presbyter of the Club; and unless at those seasons when the "fell serjeant," the gout, has arrested him, he has never absented himself from its board. He is our recorder, and there is nothing in comedy equal to his passing sentence on those who have offended against the rules and observances of the Society. Having put on Garrick's

hat, he proceeds to inflict a long wordy harangue upon the culprit, who endeavours most unavailingly to stop him. Nor is it possible to see when he means to stop. His admonitions

"Never feels retiring ebb, but keeps due pulse."

But it is the imperturbable gravity with which Jack performs his office, and the fruitless writhings of the luckless being on whom the shower of his rhetoric is discharged, that constitutes the amusement of the scene.

There is no subject upon which Jack's exuberance of talk fails him. Nor do I think that he requires a subject at all. It is like a stage-coach, that rattles on empty or full. Yet, Jack is far from being a nuisance. When you grow accustomed to his garrulity, it becomes like one of those noises in your vicinage, that of a mill for instance, to which you become reconciled, because you know that you cannot stop it. Nor is it a necessary condition on your part, that you should attend to him. Allow him to talk, and nothing more is implied in the contract.

But, as to mere quantity, I never before wit-

nessed loquacity that equalled in Jedediah Buxton, who reckoned all the lines spoken by Garrick in Hamlet, then divided them into words, and then again into syllables and letters, would have given up Jack in despair. As to the French philosopher, who held that our existence is shortened by every word we articulate—had that theory been a sound one, Jack would never have arrived at manhood. A stage in which I was travelling took him up at his country residence, and it was beyond measure diverting to see the unavailing efforts of the other passengers to get in a word; and the coachman told me, that, upon one occasion, when Jack was the only inside passenger, he happened to open the door, and found him talking at his accustomed rate. But all this is no derogation from his numerous good qualities; nor does a sounder understanding exist. Could you but get at the deliberate suffrage of that understanding, through the mazy surplusage of his words, it would not mislead you in any matter, however it might concern your weal or your woe. Nor in that stream of talk was there ever mingled one drop of malignity, nor of unkind censure upon the

erring or unhappy. He would as soon adulterate his glass of port wine with water, as dash that honest, though incessant prattle, with one malevolent or ungenerous remark.

Do you like song, pure, simple song, as it wells forth from its English fountain, unmixed with foreign and fantastic refinements? William Linley will charm you at the Beef-Steaks.* He

* The following elegant sonnet was addressed to Linley, by one, who described as a poet what he felt as a man. It was written on hearing him sing one of Purcell's anthems.

TO WILLIAM LINLEY, ESQ.

While my young cheek retains its healthful hues,
And I have many friends who hold me dear,
Linley! methinks, I would not often hear
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,
For which my miserable brethren weep!
But should uncomforted misfortunes steep
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;
And if at death's dread moment I should lie
With no beloved face at my bed-side,
To fix the last glance of my closing eye,
Methinks, such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

despises (perhaps too much) the modern Italian school; he is indignantly impatient of the frivolous English compositions of the present day.

> "——— the light airs, and re-collected terms
> Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times."

A melody of Arne's, or of Jackson's of Exeter, or a simple air of his father's, he executes to admiration; and, amidst all the revolutions and vicissitudes of the art, he has been found faithful to the characteristic chastity of the style of singing peculiar to the Linley family. I had never the good fortune to hear his sister, Mrs. Sheridan; but I can form some judgment of the effect of her voice and manner upon the heart (and music is but a silly thing when it does not reach the heart) by its effect upon an old and enthusiastic votary of music, who assured me, that when he heard her many years ago sing the divine air, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," he was ready to exclaim in the rapturous language of Isaac Walton upon the nightingale,—"Lord, Lord, what music hast thou not reserved for thy

saints in heaven, when thou hast indulged such sounds to bad men on earth!"

Nature, it is true, has denied to our brother Linley what is called a fine voice; and what little organ she allowed him, perhaps, is not much the better for port wine and late nights. Still, however, you will forget his deficiencies of power, in the spirit and taste of his manner. I know of no greater treat than one of his little ballads, when he is in the humour to sing it, for he is not over-compliant in this respect; and, like the musician in Horace, is too apt to practise the "*nunquam rogatus.*"

But it is in the bundle of habits and peculiarities that constitute Will Linley, and distinguish him from his species, or rather make him a species by himself, that any thing like an exact portraiture of him is to be traced; and to these, no description can do justice. Our Club abounds with characters, but they have all some affinity with the ordinary race of mankind. Will is a character much more emphatically; for nothing that savours of this nether world can be said to belong to him. Yet his oddities, that would so

deform and disfigure any other being, as to drive him from the pale of social life, sit with so exact a consentaneousness upon himself, that they make him one of the pleasantest and most interesting persons in it; but if, by any training or discipline, you could divest him of them, he would become instantly of all bipeds, the most vapid, and unmeaning.

He entered the world with a large ready-made assortment of prejudices; and he has retained them all to the present hour. His notions are a part of his family, and he clings to them with the warmth of an habitual and long-indulged affection. Some of them are grotesque and absurd in the highest degree; they are, for that reason, the dearer to him. Thus he has grown old, not from experience, but years; for with regard to experience in the forms, the usages, the habitudes of life, could he survive the lapse of a century, he would still retain the simplicity of youth. As for the process, by which he arrived at his opinions, that is not very apparent. There, however, they are—fixed and rivetted in his brain, and no ratiocination can reach—no refutation

shake them. It is quite amusing to remark with what an amiable and anile tenderness he fondles them, without the slightest argument in their defence; but, above all, the perfect composure with which he hears them confuted every day, conceding every time the whole series of propositions, by which the confutation is achieved; and then, when his opponent has done talking, calmly asserting his right to remain in the same opinion as before.

Of the same immoveable kind, is his opinion on the stale subject of Catholic emancipation. No force of argument can loosen its grasp. It sits secure amidst the superannuated garrison of his other notions, and entrenched within the same impenetrable fortresses. Not that he argues when he is vanquished. He never argues, and is therefore never vanquished. I was highly entertained one day, when a warm advocate for the Catholic cause thought that he was overthrowing, by a course of Socratic interrogation, the decided unqualified negative of honest Will upon the claims of that large portion of the community; and calculating that reasoning would have the same ope-

ration upon his, as upon the general run of human understandings.

"I think I can convince you," said he to Linley, "if you are candid."

"I am candid," rejoined the other, "but not to be convinced."

"I will begin then. Will you not allow, that in all civil communities, each individual has a right to worship his Creator in the mode he thinks best, if, in so doing, he does not disturb the peace and order of society?"

"Certainly."

"If, then, the Catholics claim that very right, and their tenets and worship are by no means injurious to the public tranquillity, ought the civil magistrate to punish them by a penal exclusion from the rights and immunities which are enjoyed by others?"

"Oh! no—my good fellow—certainly not."

"Well then—is there any thing in their holding transubstantiation, or in kneeling to saints, or in making confessions, or in considering an old man, or rather an old woman at Rome, as the head of their church; and permitting that old

woman to give orders, and to make regulations about that church: is there any thing in all this that can promote rebellion against the laws, or disobedience to the authority of the state?"

"Oh! by no means. Let them believe what they like."

"Perhaps, then, you will admit, that to punish them for their belief or their worship, is not likely to make them better or more obedient subjects, nor the best way to make them relinquish them; but, on the contrary, to render them troublesome enthusiasts, or turbulent for the recovery of what they conceive to be unjustly withheld from them?"

"I admit all that," exclaimed Linley.

"Then do you not think," continued the other, "that if there is a decided majority of these enthusiasts and 'troublesome customers' in Ireland, who are rendered so by the penal laws, which they ask you to remove, that this valuable member of our empire is now, or may be, soon endangered?"

"Assuredly."

"Why, then, would it not be better to give

them what they want, and render them insignificant and harmless (as all sects become when you let them alone) rather, than by keeping open their discords, and nurturing their animosities, make them, by your policy, the bad subjects, which you admit that their religious notions, or modes of worship, have no tendency to make them?"

"Why, yes, I admit all that; but I must still keep to my opinion,—that Catholic emancipation would overturn church, state, and every thing."

There was something truly comic in the disappointment of this ingenious disputant, when he found the most willing admission of all his premises, without the slightest inclination to concur in his conclusion; and that he had thrown away so much good logic upon an intellect that never submitted to its jurisdiction, and suffered no argument to come within the precincts of its preconceptions. The reasoner, however, was one who loved humour; and having stared a few seconds at his invincible antagonist, he became instantly alive to the farce, and burst into a shout of laughter.

Linley imparted to Mr. Thomas Moore some interesting materials for the work which, under

the title of a Life of Sheridan, is such a motley patchwork of metaphor, simile, and quotation from Ovid's Metamorphoses, that the slender streak of biography that intersects its gaudy and enamelled pages, is hardly discernible. When the editor first waited upon Will, with a solicitation for all the information he could supply respecting his brother-in-law, the interview did not promise a fruitful supply of anecdote. Our worthy friend's memory is proverbially treacherous, and it generally contrives to break down with the incident or joke at the most critical moment. It fortuned so on this occasion. "Ah! Mr. Moore," said he, as soon as the purpose of the visit was opened, "I am exceedingly happy to find that you have undertaken the task of writing the life of my brother-in-law, Mr. Sheridan. I say my brother-in-law," (Will is minutely circumstantial in narration,) "for you know that he married my sister." "I comprehend you perfectly," said the other. "Oh! Mr. Moore, I must first tell you an admirable epigram written by Sheridan, soon after his marriage, whilst it is fresh in my recollection. It is so poignant, and so witty, that I

would not have you omit it on any account." "Now, then, let me have it," exclaimed the biographer, taking out his note-book. "I 'll give it you presently, Mr. Moore; but I must first mention the circumstance in which it originated, that you may enter completely into its spirit. Why, you must know, Mr. Moore, that Mr. Sheridan, just after his marriage, was determined to take a trip to the continent with his wife, my sister. For this purpose, they took a small vessel at Harwich, which was bound to Rotterdam. It was the Minerva, Captain Brown—stop, stop, it was the Venus, Captain Thompson—or, I think, it was the Eliza, Captain"——

"It does not matter, Mr. Linley, what the ship was, or who commanded her.—Pray, let 's have the epigram."

"You shall have it presently, Mr. Moore; but I have not yet come to it. Well, Sir, this Captain Brown of the Minerva, or Captain Thompson of the Venus, was a surly, ill-behaved fellow; and used Mr. Sheridan, and my sister, very shamefully. They were detained by contrary winds, and there was not a morsel to eat or drink

on board. So, Sir, Sheridan was determined that the fellow should suffer for it;—so he wrote an epigram upon him, which is the severest thing I ever saw; it did for him completely.".

" Ay," said Moore, who was beginning to be impatient—" now for the epigram."

" To be sure," continued Linley, " it was the happiest hit that ever was—it did not spare the fellow, I assure you."

Here a pause ensued, during which the reciter of the epigram was biting his lips in an apparent agony to recover it. " The epigram, the epigram, Mr. Moore—why—by G—, I have forgot the epigram!" This anecdote found its way to the Beef-Steaks, and after dinner there was a universal vociferation for the epigram, to the no small vexation of our worthy brother.

A better heart never beat than that of this excellent creature, of which, his conduct to his unfortunate friend, Leftley, affords abundant proof. Poor Charles Leftley is, probably, by this time forgotten, except by the few who witnessed his extraordinary talents, and knew his modest and unobtrusive virtues. That re-

tiring, unostentatious kind of genius, which, though not unconscious of its powers, retires from the vulgar gaze, shrinking, like the tenderest of plants, whether it is wooed by the hot embrace of the sun, or chilled by "the rude breath of the north," was not unmarked of many who had watched its first timid buddings, and joyed over its expanding ripeness. But the early promise of that ill-fated youth, and the keen blast of adversity that crushed it, is a common, but a sad story. He was one of that numerous but luckless race, whose hopes of ingenuous fame are high and ardent, and whose fancy is wont to revel amidst the bright, though fallacious, visions that are incident to a strong poetic temperament, intensely excited. But neither genius, nor letters brought him the few humble distinctions which he merited; nor, after a season, the bread that nature must not be denied. With a constitution habitually delicate, and sinking under disappointment (for the iron had entered his soul), he attended the long midnight debates of Parliament as a reporter; and gave, in that capacity, the fullest satisfaction to his employers. Under

these labours, aggravated by the unseen but unintermitted anxieties of his mind, his constitution sank rapidly; and our honest-hearted friend, Linley, rescued him, whilst he was on his death-bed, from the ruffians of the law, whom a low attorney had let loose upon him at that awful moment when all consciousness had nearly left him, and his life stood on his lips as if ready to depart.

It was only within a small circle that the poetical talents of Charles Leftley were known or appreciated. The laboured mediocrity, the tinsel polished into glare, which, since his time, have been allowed to pass for poetry, and to usurp its rewards, placed by the side of his severe and chastened taste, and his simple but captivating imagery, glowing alike with the warmth of his heart, and of his imagination, would have faded into nothingness. I think Southey, who is never slow to discern, nor reluctant to acknowledge all kinds of contemporary merit, was the first who directed the public attention to poor Leftley's sonnets, as master-pieces in their kind. Alas! it was "a thankless muse that he meditated." Fortunately, he died before the existing

school of poetry had arisen (if the sacred name of poetry is to be so prostituted), before praise and emolument had been showered down on the * * * * * * and the *hoc genus omne*, whose theory it is that nothing is poetical that does not recede from common sense in thought or perspicuity in expression, or the bitterness of his own disappointment would have been in no slight degree sharpened by the misdirected patronage of compositions so revolting to a mind that is truly and essentially poetic.

The little life of Charles Leftley was "rounded by a dream;" but it was a dream into which the whole vitality, the very identity of a youthful poet, becomes transfused. He loved; and in his decaying health to have told him that his passion was not returned, would have at once snapped the filmy thread on which his existence hung: it was returned—not, indeed, with love, which comes at no one's bidding, yet with all that a kind and compassionate nature could yield in its place—by pity, which is generally supposed (perhaps erroneously) to be akin to it. He was willing to be deceived; and he believed that a

warmer feeling inspired it—a feeling that was not divided with others, but glowed in the gentlest of female bosoms for himself alone. Who could find it in his heart to dislodge this cherished idea —to refute this hallowed creed of his imagination? But despondence, and even despair, had also their turns; moments came upon him when he felt that, however agonizing it was to doubt, it was folly to hope; and he would sit whole hours, benighted in the soul's gloom, brooding over the sad accidents of sickness, neglect, obscurity, and indigence, that had so cruelly darkened his prospects, and crossed his early and his latest aspirations. Disease, therefore, upon feelings thus attuned, and a frame so enervated, made but short work of it. I must not forget to mention that the vision of Leftley's heart and fancy was his friend Linley's sister; a miniature resemblance of Mrs. Sheridan, endued with many of her graces, and, in musical accomplishments, scarcely inferior to that highly-gifted woman. This lady afterwards made a matter-of-fact match of it with a most unpoetical personage, a Mr. Ward; but she soon followed, and almost as

prematurely, the early fate of the female branch of her family.

Linley collected, with a pious care for his poor friend's memory, his scattered poetical fragments, and published them in a volume, to which he prefixed a short biographical notice. But he did not shine as an editor, having inserted in the book as many of his own pieces as of Leftley's; or as a wag, who was mentioning the circumstance at the Beef-Steaks, expressed it, "he had packed up his own clothes in his friend's portmanteau." But Will, as a biographer, laid himself quite prostrate to the attacks of the Club; for in that little composition, not a few of those solecisms had escaped him, to which unpractised writers are always liable, and these were carefully picked up by some facetious critic for a little mirth at his expense. The luckless sentences which this merciless censor hauled into notice ran thus: "Charles Leftley was the eldest son of his father;"—a truth, for the correctness of which, Linley warmly pledged himself. The same playful persecutor of Bill's authorship found also, or pretended to find (for the rogue read it all from the book) the following Johnsonian pas-

sage respecting Leftley's birth:—"His father was a traitor, and his mother a sempstress; an union, which, if not first suggested, was probably accelerated by the mutual sympathies of a congenial occupation." This pompous sentence excited considerable mirth, and the sober truism contained in the following passage, produced a still greater sensation. "It is a well-known fact that novelty itself, *by frequent repetition*, loses much of its attraction."

This, however, was nothing to the amusement furnished by a novel in three volumes, which poor Linley had been ill-advised enough to publish, and for which Sir Richard Phillips gave him the immense *honorarium* of thirty pounds. It was called Ralph Reybridge. The schooling he received at the Beef-Steaks for this production had a most salutary effect; for I am persuaded that otherwise he would have brought out a whole progeny of novels. But Will, when the agony of wounded authorship was over, used to exclaim to his tormentors—

> This is no flattery; these are counsellors
> That feelingly persuade me what I am.

The admonition, though useful, was severely administered. For the same Zoïlus brought a volume of the work in his pocket, and read a passage of it aloud. This was an ungentle, and almost unkind, discipline. Linley, poor soul, in the innocence of his character, imagined that he could paint the world; he, to whom it was all a *terra incognita;* he, to whom the wiles and tortuous labyrinths of man's heart were as familiar as to the infant who has just peeped into it! It could not, therefore, be supposed that a mind so untutored in human life, should produce interesting and engaging portraitures of it; and certain it is, that when the production made its appearance, it was found to consist of those threadbare occurrences, and common-place sentiments, a specimen of which, the merciless wight who brought the book, read to the Club as follows. It describes a peregrination of the hero, and forms part of a chapter entitled

THE RECOGNITION.

"Our hero, who had now walked eighteen miles, arrived, hungry and exhausted, at a neat-looking

inn. Much as his thoughts were engrossed by the idea of his charming Amelia, and though the tenderness of the parting scene still occupied his memory, yet exercise and fatigue produced their usual effects on a constitution naturally robust, and he was visited with the cravings of a violent appetite. As he approached the larder, his eyes sent forth a glance of eager inquiry as to its contents, and he asked the landlady, in a tone of impatience, what she had for his supper. The landlady, a fat buxom widow of forty, with a complacent smile, in which pity for the young pedestrian (for she read upon his countenance that some secret sorrow was preying on his heart) had a considerable share, gave the usual reply, 'Beef-steaks, mutton chops, and veal cutlets.' The contrariety of temptations acting with nearly equal force, at first perplexed our hero; but his choice was soon determined by the inviting appearance of the veal cutlet, and a piece of cold bacon, its natural ally, that lay beside it.

"The repast was soon served up to him, with a pint of tolerable Port, which would have reconciled him to homelier fare than that before him;

for, under all the vicissitudes of his fate, and the bitterest disappointment of his hopes, Port wine never failed to administer a balm to his feelings. But what was Ralph's astonishment at observing the waiter give an involuntary start as he put it on the table? Our hero in his turn started also; and, looking the waiter more observantly in the face, every trait of which had been long familiar to him, exclaimed with the greatest emotion—'Eh—Eh—it cannot be—yes, it must be—it is Rumbsby.'

"'Yes, Reybridge, it is Rumbsby,' returned the waiter, and threw himself into our hero's arms. 'It is your own Rumbsby!'"

This most singular recognition excited considerable mirth. Whether it was a *bonâ fide* reading from the book, or a malicious interpretation to raise a laugh against the novel-writer, I cannot exactly determine; but that a scene of this kind actually occurs in the work, is, I think, evident from an oil-painting in the exhibition of that year, marked in the catalogue thus.—"Ralph Reybridge recognizing his friend Rumbsby in the disguise of a waiter, at the Falcon Inn. From the

novel of Ralph Reybridge." So that it appears to have been a favourite scene of the author's.

Yet, when we recollect the snares that vanity is for ever throwing about our paths to entangle us, who could be so cold-blooded as to deride or sneer at this worthy creature, for a slight miscalculation of his powers? The thing itself is common, and the failing a venial one; it is a misallied branch of that noble spirit, that spurs us on to the great enterprizes of the intellect and the imagination; and it would be a dangerous, as well as ungenerous policy, to frown down the innocent, though mistaken predilections, we sometimes entertain for the very productions, to which our powers are the most incompetent. It is, however, justice fairly due to Linley, and to the Sublime Society itself, to remark, that on these occasions, he never betrayed the irritable sulkiness of a roasted author, but took the pleasantries that played around him with the most imperturbable good humour; nay, I am quite convinced, that the *platitudes* of his novel were placed before him in so ridiculous a light, that he himself most heartily concurred in the laugh

they excited. Such is the spirit of this admirable Club—the very martyr of the joke becomes its auxiliary.

I cannot find that Linley furnished Moore, for his Life of Sheridan, with any materials but the common-place books, in which his brother-in-law was occasionally wont to deposit his dramatic sketches, or to bottle-up the jokes he had collected for future use, and which he had either imagined himself, or heard from any one else. But Linley, I think, might have scraped up many facetious pleasantries of Sheridan, many of which were deeply engraved in his recollection, because they had been practised upon himself, or upon his brother Hozy (as Sheridan called him), who was an unfailing butt when he was disposed to amuse himself with a practical jest. On one occasion, the jest was much too practical, if, as Sheridan afterwards gave out, it was intended for a jest, which I am much disposed to doubt. Poor Linley, many years ago, had written a musical farce, in two acts, called the Pavilion, which was acted at Drury Lane, and had set the songs to some exquisite music of his own com-

position, which was highly and justly admired. But not being much experienced in dramatic writing, and naturally solicitous for the success of his first attempt in that department, he placed it in Sheridan's hands, that the dialogue might receive a few touches from so great a master. Sheridan undertook the task with his usual good-nature, which, as every one knows, was inexhaustible in all kinds of promise. The piece was cast—the performers were satisfied with their parts—and the night fixed for its representation; but the manuscript still slumbered upon Sheridan's table, and it was only by incessant importunities that the author could recover it in time for a rehearsal. But it was returned with no correction or alteration whatever, save the slight addition of a very middling joke upon the lover's valet, who, it seems, was subject to perpetual fits of absence, did every thing in a violent hurry, and united the incompatible offices of writing love-verses for his master, and getting every thing ready that appertained to his toilette. This addition Linley could not very well reject, though it was "none of the newest," for the idea, such as it was, had

been worn threadbare by Congreve and Cibber. In answer to his master's reproof of his negligence, the fellow makes a remonstrance upon the irksome and incongruous duties that were cast upon him.

"There," says he, "had I not fifty verses to write for you upon your finding Miss Louisa Dangle's garter? Had I not at the same time your coat to brush, your boots to polish, your hair to dress, and to carry the poetry, with the garter enclosed, to Miss Dangle's maid—and was not all this to be done in a single hour?"

His master replies: "Yes, you blockhead, and you marred the whole by your cursed confusion of head, and precipitancy of action; for you ran in a violent bustle to Miss Dangle, burglariously entered her dressing-room, and brushed her riding-habit *vi et armis*—then curled her hair by sheer force with cold curling-irons;—and, after all, inscribed the verses to me, and enclosed the garter in the envelope."

This, which is certainly not in the best antithetic style of Sheridan's comedy, was, by the critics of the pit, who never dreamed that She-

ridan had furnished it, considered as a miserable attempt on the part of the author to mimic the manner of that great comic writer, and probably conduced much to the failure of the piece. When Sheridan was told of the mischief which his slight contribution had effected, he replied with infinite coolness, "It's the very thing I wished: the farce was so replete with absurdities, that I thought there was no harm in hazarding one absurdity more. Bill Linley has a good situation in the Company's service—why does he not go back to India? If his d——d farce had succeeded, we should have had him here for the rest of his life, scratching his head in a garret, or twiddling his thumbs in the green-room, instead of saving rupees enough to come back, and loll in his carriage."

In all probability, Sheridan, whose dramatic reading (limited as his range of reading had been in other branches of literature), had met with something resembling this epigrammatic description of the blunders of a lacquey, and clapped it into his dramatic note-book, where it was to lie snugly till an occasion offered for making use of it, when it was to receive the necessary polish, and

to be brightened into wit. In an indolent mood, however, he probably transferred it into Linley's farce, without giving himself any trouble in improving it; for he had, as Moore has justly remarked, a most astonishing talent of working up the raw material of inferior intellects into a manufacture not unworthy of his own. His biographer has traced many of his happiest sallies in the House of Commons to very ordinary archetypes. I would undertake to assert, that a very great part of the most striking passages in his speeches might be pursued to sources whence it would hardly be suspected that he had condescended to borrow, what his genius enabled him afterwards to repay so usuriously. One instance of this, which Moore has overlooked, is observable in that part of his celebrated speech on the trial of Hastings, where he describes the devastation of the province of Oude—a passage that has been highly extolled for its eloquence.

"If we could suppose a person to have come suddenly into the country, unacquainted with the circumstances that had passed since the days of Sujah Ul Dowlah, he would naturally ask—What

cruel hand had wrought this wide desolation?—What barbarian foe had invaded the once smiling province, ravaged its fields, and depopulated its villages?—He would ask, what disputed succession, what military rage, what civil phrenzy, had induced the inhabitants to rise in savage hostility to the commands of Providence, and the works of man? He would ask what religious zeal, what unbridled fanaticism, had aggravated the black despair, and licentious havoc of war?"

It will be perceived, that he had consulted Sir John Denham's poem called Cowper's Hill, and found there the first rude sketch of that thought, which he afterwards so finely amplified in the lines, where the poet beautifully deplores the ruin and spoliation of the religious houses by Henry the Eighth.

"Who sees these dismal heaps, but would demand
What barbarous invader sacked the land?
But when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
This desolation, but a Christian king," &c. &c.

The two first lines seem to have suggested the sentence of the speech which I have quoted; and the next couplet to have supplied the passage im-

mediately following: "But when he was told, that it was not foreign barbarism that had spread so wide a calamity;—that no disputed succession had deluged the land with blood;—that it was not religious fury that had lighted up the flames of war;—but the *protecting* hand of the British government," &c. &c.

We must return, however, to the Beef-Steaks. —And it were unkind to pass by in our enumeration of its worthies, our excellent brother, Dick Wilson, whose volcanic complexion has for many years been assuming deeper and deeper tints of carnation over the Port-wine of the Society. Dick is a wealthy solicitor, of considerable eminence, and many years the secretary to the late Lord Chancellor Eldon. He is in many respects an original. It is true, that through every scene of his life, which has been a truly fortunate one, he has been sufficiently alive to his own interests; but he has not, on the other hand, been cold or insensible to others. His large stock of worldly wisdom, not more the gradual accumulations of long experience, and of acute observation, than the result of a natural constitutional aptitude for

thrift and advancement, is not sullenly expended upon himself, nor exclusively applied to the furtherance of his own schemes of emolument. He is a zealous, active friend. There are upon record many honourable manifestations of his kind heartedness. He is also hospitable in a certain way; that is, by inviting as many guests as his table will hold, and quite as many as his table will supply, or rather double that number, without paying the least attention to the classing and assorting his company. So that if you dine with Dick, you may think yourself peculiarly well off, if you are not elbowed by the identical person whom you would most wish at the devil; and the whole party would be egregiously lucky, if their festivity was not completely overlaid by some wet blanket of above at least thirty years standing, who, for that long period, has been proscribed from all human association, and whose dinner at Dick's comes in as a sort of parenthesis to the daily tenor of his existence. I remember dining with Dick during an election-week for Westminster, when party feelings ran very high. Before the company were fully assembled, the

drawing-room door flew open for a gentleman, who, in the course of the morning's debate on the hustings, had received a kick from a person who differed from him in politics; and a few minutes after, the very person was announced, by whom the assault had been made. This was a *concordia discors* of the most interesting kind, and was much more amusing to every body else than it was to the parties themselves, who found themselves, as may be easily imagined, in no very agreeable position to each other. Nay, so totally unmindful is Dick of all social incompatibilities, that a lady, who, in consequence of certain matrimonial infelicities, had been separated from her husband, was seated one day at his table next to a chair apparently kept vacant for a guest, who had not yet made his appearance; when, in the middle of dinner, the husband himself glided into the apartment, apologised for being late, and took the unoccupied seat by the side of his wife, to which Dick, in utter unconsciousness of the relative character of either, had motioned him. I have once or twice met Sir Francis Burdett at one of Dick's hospitable parties in Lincoln's Inn

Fields. The first time I had that good fortune, was about the period of Cobbett's ungrateful and dishonest conduct towards that high-minded man, when every circle rang with indignation, and no one pronounced the very name of Cobbett without disgust. I remarked, on this occasion, a chair kept for some person who was expected, and asked Arnold, who sate near me, if he knew for whom it was reserved, "Can you have any doubt?" said Arnold: "why, for Cobbett to be sure." All this jumble arises from a sort of chaotic confusion in Dick's memory, when he sends out his invitations, and from his picking up one half of his party, as he accidentally meets them in the street. Some of these *contretemps* have been so strange, and have given birth to such ludicrous scenes, as sometimes to throw upon Dick the suspicion of having got them up as regular jokes; but Dick may be honestly acquitted of all premeditated facetiousness.

The almost unintermitted tide of good fortune, on which Dick has rode so prosperously through a pretty long life, has been already hinted. The bulk of his wealth, which is considerable, was de-

rived from the late very eccentric Lord Chedworth, who became acquainted with him by mere accident, made him his steward, and solicitor, and at his decease the residuary legatee of all his personal property, having devised to a Mr. Pennie, of Great Yarmouth, the whole of his landed property. In consideration of the transfer of the residuary property, Pennie agreed to transfer the estates to Wilson; an exchange in which Dick's good genius appeared to desert him, for as it turned out, the residue was considerably more valuable than the land. Of this accidental acquaintance, which laid the foundation of Dick's opulence, the origin was one of those whimsical fatalities with which Fortune, in her sportive mood, occasionally amuses herself. Dick chanced to be one of a party that went down by water to Richmond; they carried with them their own provision, for the purpose of dining in the open air, and fixed upon a delightful spot beneath the canopy of a fine beech-tree in Mr. Cambridge's meadow for the place of their repast. It seemed to have been planned by Nature for such a purpose; but, to their great mortification, they ob-

served a public notice affixed in legible characters to a tree near the water-side, prohibiting persons from dining in any part of the grounds; but the prohibition was thus expressed, "ALL PERSONS LANDING AND DINING HERE WILL BE PROSECUTED ACCORDING TO LAW." This was too plain a hint to be misunderstood, and the party were about to turn their boat in search of some other nook, where they could spread their cloth without committing a trespass; when Dick assured them, that if they proceeded a few yards lower down, and *then* landed, their case would not come within the letter of the notice. All penal laws, reasoned Dick, are to be construed strictly. A notice prohibiting persons from sitting down to enjoy their dinner, is in the nature of a penal law, and to be construed strictly. We are forbidden to land *and* dine there; but if we land *elsewhere*, we may dine *there*; for the word *and* has a copulative, not a disjunctive sense. This ingenious construction was instantly adopted; and Dick's astute commentary strongly recommended him to Lord Chedworth, as a person likely to be of great service to him in the management of his property,

which turned out to be a very productive employment during the peer's life, and terminated, as we have seen, in the magnificent bequest, which remunerated Dick's zeal and activity at the close of it.

The dispositions of this will were so extraordinary, as to suggest to his Lordship's next of kin an application to the Court of Chancery to set it aside; and an issue to try the sanity of the testator was moved for. But the motion was negatived, after hearing a long series of affidavits sworn by persons of the highest respectability in the kingdom; all of whom bore the strongest attestation, not only to the general soundness of Lord Chedworth's intellect, but to the peculiar vigour and perspicuity of his reasoning powers, and to the great extent and variety of his attainments, particularly in criticism, and historical information of every kind. It is not to be denied, however, that many of the legacies were almost whimsically bequeathed. Pennie was totally unconnected with him, but as his apothecary; and the other dispositions savoured of an eccentric humour, contracted most probably from

the early circumstances of his Lordship's life. Lord Chedworth had once been the victim of a most cruel and unjust accusation; and he had been advised to bring an action for civil damages against the calumniator, from whom, under Lord Mansfield's direction to the jury, he recovered five hundred pounds. Having thus made his election, and waived by his appeal to a court of law, the course of proceeding which custom prescribes on such occasions, an attempt was made in certain quarters, and not without success, to deprive him of an honourable estimation among English gentlemen. It was, no doubt, in this circumstance that his long cherished habits of solitude and seclusion first originated; and they secluded him for the residue of his days from the sphere of society to which he naturally belonged. He inhabited for nearly that period a small house in the market-place at Ipswich, and lived upon so restricted a scale of expenditure, that his property rapidly accumulated. In this retirement, his favourite pursuits were seemingly inconsistent ones—the study of law—and of Shakspeare: and thus he was enabled to discharge the duties of a

magistrate with the greatest accuracy, while his lighter hours were devoted to an employment fitted for an elegant mind—the illustration of the great poet of nature. Upon the various dramas of Shakspeare, his annotations were remarkable for clear sense and critical discrimination, and many of them have been since adopted into the voluminous edition by Reed.

Probably it was his predilection for dramatic reading that made him an almost constant frequenter of the Ipswich theatre, and a munificent benefactor to the company that played there. I need not advert to the precarious remunerations earned even by the best performers on a provincial stage, or the perpetual conflicts they have generally to carry on with the severest ills of life. But picture to yourself, kind-hearted reader, the mixed emotions of surprise, joy, and gratitude, experienced by three or four actors in that company, when they learned that their noble patron had benevolently remembered each in his will. To a Mr. Seymour, his Lordship left an annuity of £300, together with his manuscripts concerning Shakspeare; to a Mrs. Taylor nearly £5,000 in

the three per cents, and many smaller benefactions distributed among several inferior members of the corps. I know not how others would feel, and I care not; but for mine own part, I cannot imagine a luxury of the heart, an enjoyment of the intellect, more perfect, more true and unmixed than that which must have been felt by this excellent, though singular being, as his hands traced the words, that in a few short months (for he died soon after he had written his will, which was all in his own hand-writing, saving the signatures of the witnesses,) were to raise those victims of the world's contempt to a degree of ease, comfort, and independence, which they had never dared even to hope for in the wildest dreams of their fancy.

Dick stood the fire of the Beef-Steaks with exemplary coolness and good-humour. But he was sometimes unmercifully roasted. I remember his dining there after his return from a short trip to Paris, to which city he had gone immediately after the peace, to stare and gape, and make blunders in French with nearly all the rest of his countrymen. Arnold contrived, with great

dexterity, to draw him into some Parisian details; for Dick's entire innocence of the French language, and his stubborn indocility to all foreign usages and customs, rendered his descriptions quite original. On this occasion, he was singularly happy in enumerating the dishes at a French table, and in describing those which most pleased him, his memory was sure to betray its usual infelicity. He told us, for instance, that he thought the *boulevards* that were served up to him at a certain table d'hôte, delicious. We could never satisfactorily trace through the labyrinth of poor Dick's misapprehensions, what was the specific dish which he meant to describe when he stumbled on this absurd misnomer; but we concluded that it was either a simple *bouilli*, or a *bouilli vert*, that he wished to specify. Cobb called out, "Dick, it was well they did not serve you up the Palais Royale for sauce to your *boulevards*." As for the *ris de veau*, which Dick thought the perfection of the French cookery, he was eternally extolling it; but he took care to give it a name more familiar to his English ear, though in reality a French one—for

he called it a *rendezvous*. Being asked if he liked the French mode of cooking their partridges, (these questions were insidiously put for the sake of eliciting some amusing blunder) he said, he could not bear them served up in *shoes*. Here we were all at fault for some minutes, till, at length, an Oedipus solved the enigma; for it was *perdrix aux choux* that Dick intended by that strange phrase. It was upon this occasion, that a gentleman who had dined with Dick at Very's, assured us that in the course of the dinner they served up a roasted partridge, when Dick asked the waiter, or rather intended to ask him for a pheasant, alledging that he was tired of partridge; but, as usual, Dick mistook the word *(faisan)*, and desired him to bring him a *paysanne!* In short, there was no end to the slips into which his most ungallican organ betrayed him.

The student of human nature would have but an imperfect collection of anomalies without such a character as Dick. For it brings, as it were, into the same focus of observation, the most opposite contrarieties of mind and intellect which human nature supplies. Would you think, giving

credence to these anecdotes, and they are undeniably authentic, that with this predestinated, incorrigible habit of blundering, Dick is shrewd, correct, and intelligent in all matters where those qualities may be most usefully called into play? It is, however, not quite easy, it must be confessed, to reconcile with any tolerable degree of accuracy of judgment, an unaccountable aberration which Cobb used to relate of him, and which almost reminds one of some of the absurdities collected by Hierocles. Dick one day called at the Secretary's office in the India House upon Cobb, who happened for a few minutes to be absent; but, on returning, who should he see but Dick, earnestly exploring a map of Asia that was suspended on the wall, measuring the scale of it with a pair of compasses that he found on the table, and then applying them to a large tiger, which the artist had introduced to embellish it, as one of the animals of that country. "By heavens, Cobb," exclaimed Dick, "I should never have believed it! Surely, it must be a mistake. Observe now—here," pointing to the tiger, "here is a tiger that measures two-and-

twenty leagues. By Gemini, it is scarcely credible!"

Dick was a member of the celebrated Drury Lane Committee, and took his share of that motley theatrical monarchy, which, if it answered no other purpose, at least served to illustrate the misrule and confusion that must always result, when any business is managed by persons who are utterly ignorant of it. It would, however, be but a sorry compliment to Dick, to say that he was as fit for a theatrical legislator as * * * * * * * * *, or any other person, who, taking measure of his own intellect, and arbitrarily putting upon it his own valuation, imagines that no appeal lies from the decisions of his taste and genius. Had Dick been the sole superintendent of that over-governed concern, I am sure that he would not have crammed down the public throat so much insipid stuff in the shape of new, or revived dramas as was brought out in that interval; much less the ridiculous, abominable imitations of humanity, that, during the period of that dramatic usurpation, crowded the stage in the shape of actors and actresses.

From this animadversion, it behoves me to except Lord Byron, who, with every rightful claim to admonish or regulate, neither advised nor regulated. Yet no one was more sensitively alive to the assumptions of * * * * *, nor saw with a clearer discernment, the thin-spread layer of information, that covered as much intellectual inanity as falls to the lot of man, and much more than his usual allowance of conceit and assurance. "All * * * * * goods," said he, "are brought to the shop-window. There is little or nothing in his warehouse, and what there is, is damaged."

Dick never interfered with theatrical business. The only time he ever exerted any influence in the green-room was, when he requested them to revive Southern's play of Oronooko, which had delighted him when a boy. This was not quite convenient, but they promised Dick that it should be got up, and played on the Saturday following. On that night, however, they acted Othello, which had been already in preparation; but Dick, who had not seen the bills, attended the performance of his favourite tragedy, and observing a black man on the stage, had no

doubt of its being Oronooko, and went home amused and satisfied.

It was by this means that Wilson was brought into contact with many eminent theatrical characters, whom he frequently invited to his table, and entertained with his accustomed liberality. I had the happiness to meet John Kemble there, and I was highly delighted with my good fortune, and the more so, as I sate next to him. The conversation at first did not seem to interest him. Dick's instinct for inviting bores had not been inactive on this occasion. A Mr. W——w kept up a perpetual spluttering, and went on talking, though nobody seemed to listen to him. Kemble was uncommonly silent, and I did what I could, though I trust with no unseemly importunity, but only as much as he would consider complimentary, to get him to converse. A few revolutions of the bottle at length relaxed his taciturnity, and he made some remarks about Shakspeare, that proved how diligently he had read him; and what is most essential to just Shaksperean criticism, how much he had studied the poets and writers that were Shakspeare's con-

temporaries. We got upon the historic plays of the great dramatist. Kemble said, that it was not difficult, though it required some attention, to feel one's way through the historical plays; but that a little practice would soon enable a man to distinguish the metal from the clay. This was a subject peculiarly interesting to me, and I called to see him the next morning, when he kindly resumed the subject. He told me, that long before Shakspeare's time, the stage was in possession of a succession of historical dramas, which Shakspeare was employed to alter, and adapt to the more improved taste of a more modern audience; that this circumstance would sufficiently account for the evident traces of the elder plays, which a critical eye would easily discern in almost all the historical plays attributed to Shakspeare, with the exception of Richard the Third, and Henry the Eighth, which were unquestionably and exclusively his own. King John, he observed, was a patch-work of this kind, though it contained many scenes scarcely surpassed by the genius of Shakspeare. The greater

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part of the first act he considered to be spurious, as well as the second and fourth scenes of the third act, not a line of which could have flowed from a mind like Shakspeare's. But the soliloquy of Falconbridge in that act, and the speech of the same personage that concludes the second, were stamped with the impress of the mighty master. The rest of the play, he had no doubt, was genuine, not merely from the language, which was not always the surest test, but from the spirit and animation with which the characters are sustained.

I asked him what he thought of Richard the Second? He read a note he had written upon that play, in which he had calculated that not more than one half was written by Shakspeare. The rest, he said, had been retained from the old play of the same name, noticed by Camden, and Lord Bacon. "It is astonishing," he remarked, "how little this part of the subject has been attended to by the editors. Pope rejected the rhyming couplets, as not proceeding at all, or with very few exceptions, from the hand of

Shakspeare; but there his suspicions about the play stopped. He referred the striking disparity in this and in other plays, to the inequality of the poet's genius. But Shakspeare could not, unless by an intellectual impossibility, descend to low prosaic insipidity;—such trash, for instance, as the whole of the last two acts of Richard the Second. Yet, how beautifully are these acts enamelled, now and then, by Shakspeare; particularly in the entry of Bolingbroke into London, and his complaint of his son's disorderly conduct. I had great difficulty," continued Kemble, "in convincing George Steevens that the garden scene, at the conclusion of the third act, was not Shakspeare's. I read it over to him. He would not *feel* that it was spurious. Finding, therefore, that it was of no use appealing to his taste, I made use of a collateral argument, which produced instant conviction. It was this.—In all his historical plays, Shakspeare had the good sense and judgment never to deviate from the chronicles. To this Steevens fully assented. Now, at the period represented in the play, the

nominal queen was a child of only ten years of age, the daughter of Charles the Sixth of France; whereas, through the whole of this scene, by a gross blunder, she is confounded with the former queen, Anne of Bohemia. A similar instance of the historical accuracy of Shakspeare, compared with the writers of some of the plays that he retouched, occurs, I told Steevens, in the second part of Henry the Sixth, the greater part of which is genuine. There, the hereditary title of the Duke of York is stated with the greatest perspicuity; whereas, in the first part, which the ablest critics have unanimously rejected, as not containing a single line from the pen of Shakspeare, the claim of the House of March, through which that of York was derived, is enveloped in confusion and absurdity."

Kemble seemed to think lightly of Warburton, as a commentator on Shakspeare. "One of his emendations is, however," said he, "singularly happy, and the first time I played King John I adopted it, but I got hissed for it. It is in the passage of John's dialogue with Hubert. The

old editions have it thus; and it remained so in the prompt-book even in Garrick's time, who did not see the propriety of the emendation:

'If the midnight bell
Did with its iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound *on* unto the drowzy race of night.'

Now, for *sound on*, which is nonsense, Warburton reads *sound one;* and it is a strong corroboration of the reading that the ghost in Hamlet makes his appearance, 'the bell then beating ONE.' Yet, some fellows in the pit, consisting of a few lawyer's clerks, thinking that, by virtue of having paid their money at the pit-door, they had a legitimate title to become critics, tried to scout the reading, as being a wanton innovation of my own." This circumstance reminded me of his pronunciation of the word *aches* as a dissyllable, and I ventured to mention it to him. "My reason for doing so," he replied, "is unanswerable. The word was, in Shakspeare's age, always pronounced with two syllables. I used it as a dissyllable where the verse would have been spoiled had I not done so. It occurred in the Tempest, and you will find it in the passage where Prospero

his rebuking Caliban for his laziness in bringing in wood.

> 'Fill all thy bones with *aches*; make thee roar
> &c. &c. &c.

I am aware that, in detailing these conversations, I am digressing for a while from the Beef-Steak Club; but the remarks of an intelligent, and naturally strong mind, which supplied the deficiencies of an unsystematic education, by its native stores of thinking, and augmented them by constant study and observation—the remarks, too, of a man, who, next to Garrick, has contributed more to raise the profession of the stage to the honourable estimation which it now enjoys, by the correctness of his life, and the diligence with which he cultivated his art, than any other player, ancient or modern, will, I trust, obtain pardon for the digression. The moments we are permitted to pass with the good and the great, in the respective generations which they illustrate, are too fleeting and transitory not to render us willing to retain, if we can, what are

less fleeting and evanescent, the memorials of their good sense, and their virtues.

Kemble amused me much at this interview (it was the last) with an account of the getting up of Vortigern, one of young Ireland's forgeries. "I constantly refused," he said, "to look at the manuscripts which old Ireland exhibited in Norfolk Street. Mr. Malone, in a few minutes conversation, convinced me that they were spurious, and the fraud betrayed itself in the endless contradictions, into which the fellow, who pretended to have brought them into light, was betrayed, when he first began to account for their coming into his possession. At Sheridan's desire, I consented to play it; but Mrs. Siddons positively refused to enter, as she expressed herself, into so abominable a conspiracy against the memory of Shakspeare. Sheridan thought that it would be good for the treasury, and, that public curiosity, or rather the pride of having to decide whether a piece was actually written by Shakspeare or not, would fill the house for one night, even with advanced prices; 'for you know very well, Kemble,' said he, 'that an Englishman considers

himself as good a judge of Shakspeare, as of his pint of porter.' He was right. Well. The house overflowed in all parts. The first act, much of the second, and a few speeches in the third, were endured. Some murmur of discontent began, however, to be heard. 'Give the thing a fair trial,' roared out Humphrey Sturt from the stage-box, with the intonation of a bull. Such an appeal to the equity of the audience, and from such brazen beings, had some effect, and the storm was lulled; but, from time to time, there were deep growls of disapprobation from different quarters. A line occurred in the part I had to act, which they accuse me of having pronounced with a malicious emphasis, to assist the downfal of the piece. It was this:—

'I would this solemn mockery were o'er!'

The allusion was too obvious not to be caught in a moment by an audience wearied to death with what they had already gone through, but one half of whom were afraid of being too hasty in the condemnation of a play, which, if it really was Shak-

speare's, would turn the laugh against them. At this line, the most overwhelming sounds of mingled groan and laughter ran through the house; but Humphrey Sturt, whose ordinary tone of conversation reminded you of the noise of a fulling-mill, again obtained a few moment's silence, but with extraordinary efforts of voice; the pause, however, was of short duration, for Phillimore, who played Vortigern, had to call out to the soldiers, as they were leading off Mrs. Jordan, who performed Rowena,

'Give her up! Give her up! oh, give her up!'

This was too much. Humphrey Sturt threw himself back on the bench, and burst into a fit of horse-laughing, as deafening as the falls of Niagara, and the rest of the audience caught the infection. 'Give her up, give her up,' resounded from a thousand tongues; the hint was taken, and the curtain fell. Joe Richardson came to me in my dressing-room, quite delighted with the verdict of the public. 'If the thing had been tolerated,' he said, 'it would be a canister tied to Shakspeare's

tail to all succeeding ages, or remain a recorded monument of the dramatic taste and critical discernment of England at the close of the eighteenth century.' As for old Ireland, he never forgave either Phillimore or myself. He said, 'that if I had *bonâ fide* intended to let the piece have a chance, I should not, as stage-manager, have given such a character as Vortigern to Phillimore; for that his nose was long enough to —d—n the finest play Shakspeare ever wrote.' The younger Ireland, the fabricator of the fraud, was all this time sitting in one of the upper boxes, apparently unconcerned, by the side of Polly Thompson, or some such personage; the person, from whose head, as he afterwards confessed, he had cut the identical lock of hair exhibited at the elder Ireland's, as a lock from the head of Mrs. Anna Hatherewaye (the lady to whom Shakspeare is said to have been betrothed) and which he pretended to have found amongst the manuscripts, with this memorandum inscribed in Shakspeare's hand-writing. 'This is the haire of Mistresse Anne Hatherewaye.' The true believers," Kemble continued, "absolutely adored this precious

relic, which was religiously enshrined in a gilt box, lest a single hair should be lost by profane handling."

On the Saturday following, Kemble dined as a visitor at the Beef-Steaks. We resumed insensibly our last conversation, which led us, naturally enough, to the proneness almost peculiar to our nation, but most eminently so to its metropolis, of swallowing the grossest extravagances, and that too with an appetite and power of digestion that kept pace with their absurdity. The young Roscius, we all agreed, was a recollection that should call shame to the cheek of modern London. Whatever may be the share of honour due to the art of a player, neither at Paris, nor at Madrid, nor at Petersburgh; no, nor any where, but in the mid-heart of cockneyism, would it have been so insulted, as it was by the homage which the town lavished upon an automaton—a mere child, whose excellence, estimated at the highest, transcended other children only in a riper fulness of intonation, and a somewhat greater command of gesticulation. The whole, as Arnold aptly observed, was a most unnatural

and forced process; not unlike, he said, hatching eggs by steam. But it's ulterior effects, Kemble remarked, were almost death itself to the art. If crowded theatres, containing within their circle all that could be assembled of fashion, elegance, wit, beauty, taste, showered applauses upon children who ought to have been at school, could due encouragement be expected by him, who, through long and patient study, was working out his title to public approbation; by him, who, after a slow and laborious progression, had arrived at pre-eminence in a calling, that demanded, perhaps, more than any other, the ripening aid of experience to guide and regulate the powers which it called into exercise? What an insane spectacle did it exhibit of a polished nation claiming to take the lead in the protection of the liberal arts—its largest theatre crammed to suffocation, to gape upon a boy, strutting as an emperor, or kneeling as a lover; and, as if this was not enough, the journals of the following day exhausting all their English for phrases of panegyric, to describe the spirited conception, the truth and accuracy of delineation, with which

an urchin of twelve, nay, not so much—not twelve—pourtrayed the most subtle emotions, and the most complicated passions of our nature; and the rapidity, like that of instinct, with which he unravelled the most perplexed involutions of sense and diction in his author?

There was a still more recent instance of what Kemble (and I have reason to know that Mrs. Siddons fully concurred with him) considered to be an undue admeasurement of theatrical reputation, and as originating in the same unreflecting appetite for novelty, that had fostered the young Roscius into his short-lived dramatic existence. But he was sparing of remark upon the subject, and naturally shrunk, like a benevolent man, from weighing in very nice scales the deserts of any living creature, when too severe a criticism might probably intercept his bread. But somewhat of controversy having been gradually infused into the conversation, and one of the party having indulged in a most hyperbolical panegyric upon Kean's acting, he could not abstain from saying something; but it was reluctantly done, and with great candour; and not a little to Arnold's dis-

composure, who had been deputed by the Drury-Lane Committee to go down to Exeter, where Kean was playing, for the purpose of witnessing his performance; and who, having seen him in Richard, had engaged him for that theatre without further ceremony. At length, as if teazed and goaded with the unmeasured encomiums which some one, for the sake, as I suspect, of drawing Kemble out upon the subject, was lavishing upon Kean, John declared him *fit only for a burletta*. Rivalry, he remarked, was out of the question; he himself was now retired from the stage, and he was only speaking upon a mere point of taste. He thought that in a very short time the poor fellow would break down beneath the weight of his reputation. His reception, he said, was too overwhelmingly flattering to allow him time to reflect on the precarious breath of popular applause, so as to prepare for a sudden shifting of the gale; and he would thus be kept in a walk, for which neither previous study, nor natural or acquired faculties had fitted him, only to be driven from it when his incapacity to tread in it should be become more apparent. Whereas,

he observed, a really excellent artist, Talma, for instance, lay safely moored in the public approbation, and secure from the vicissitudes of taste; because the admiration he excited would stand the test of reason, and, therefore, ran no risk of a sudden and capricious diminution. "You will see," said John, with something like a prophetic gravity, "that the actor we are now canvassing, will be driven to the trick of withdrawing to America, as a frail beauty of the lobby finds it expedient to withdraw her charms from it for awhile, to reappear when her face has been long enough forgotten." The popularity of Kean was, he continued, radically unsound. The galleries, in his case, led the rest of the house; and it was his by-play (which, if not sparingly and judiciously used, was contemptible buffoonery) that chiefly delighted them.

The last time Kemble had dined with us at the Beef-Steaks, was when his friend the late Duke of Norfolk was present. The place, the chair formerly occupied by his Grace, were so many links in a chain of agreeable association, to one who remembered him so well, and loved to

cherish that remembrance; for Kemble had received many substantial kindnesses from his Grace. John told us that he had seldom, in the whole course of his life, erred on the side of convivial intemperance; but in his Grace's society, whose powers of carrying off a great quantity of wine, and the charms of whose conversation, (seducing others into the same excess,) were, he said, never equalled by man,—a long sitting seemed miraculously to comprise itself into a most inconsiderable space; and it was impossible, even for those who practised the austerest temperance, to wish to get away.

It sometimes happened, at the close of the evening, that the Duke, without exhibiting any symptom of inebriety, became immoveable in his chair, as if deprived of all muscular volition. He would then request the bell to be rang three *times*; this was a signal for bringing in a kind of easy litter, consisting of four equi-distant belts, fastened together by a transverse one, which four domestics placed under him, and thus removed his enormous bulk, with a gentle swinging motion, up to his apartment. Upon these occasions, the

Duke would say nothing; but the whole thing was managed with great system, and in perfect silence.

Kemble had, one night, sate very late at one of the potations of Norfolk-House. Charles Morris had just retired, and a very small party remained in the dining-room, when his Grace began to deplore, somewhat pathetically, the smallness of the stipend, upon which poor Charles was obliged to support his family;—observing, that it was a discredit to the age, that a man, who had so long gladdened the lives of so many titled and opulent associates, should be left to struggle with the difficulties of an inadequate income at a time of life, when he had no reasonable hope of augmenting it. Kemble listened, as he told us, with great attention to the Duke's *jeremiade*;—but, after a slight pause, his feelings, getting the better of his deference, he broke out thus, in a tone of peculiar emphasis:—

"And does your Grace sincerely lament the destitute condition of your friend, with whom you have passed so many agreeable hours? Your Grace has described that condition most

feelingly. But is it possible, that the greatest peer of the realm, luxuriating amidst the prodigalities of fortune, should lament the distress which he does not relieve? The empty phrase of benevolence—the mere breath and vapour of generous sentiment become no man; they certainly are unworthy of your Grace. Providence, my Lord Duke, has placed you in a station, where the wish to do good and the doing it, are the same thing. An annuity from your overflowing coffers, or a small nook of land, clipped from your unbounded domains, would scarcely be felt by your Grace;—but you would be repaid, my Lord, with usury;—with tears of grateful joy;—with prayers warm from a bosom, which your bounty will have rendered happy."

Such was the substance of Kemble's harangue. Jack Bannister used to relate the incident, by ingeniously putting the speech into blank verse, or rather a species of numerous prose, into which Kemble's phraseology naturally fell when he was highly animated. But, however expressed, it produced its effect. For, though the Duke (the night was

pretty far gone, and several bottles had been emptied,) said nothing at the time, but stared with some astonishment at so unexpected a lecture; not a month elapsed before Charles Morris was snugly invested in the beautiful retreat, that sequestered house, and the few acres smiling around it, to which I have alluded already. This, with a few other instances of similar benevolence, serve as pleasing contrasts to the general tenour of a character which, if nicely inspected, will be found almost uniformly selfish and sensual; but they are of too unfrequent recurrence to redeem it. Perhaps no man, except Charles the Second, of procreative memory, "diffused his Maker's image through the land"* more than his late Grace of Norfolk. Nor was he fastidiously delicate as to the moulds which fashioned his progeny. Most of them are remarkable for a gipsy tint, and Jewish confirmation of visage. To some of his natural children he was kind, but to others he gave no aid or protection. One of them who had received little or nothing from him in his

* Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel.

life-time, but had been taught to expect something at his death, vented his disappointment in this epitaph :—

> On Norfolk's tomb inscribe this placard,
> He lived a beast, and died a blackguard.

You would hardly expect, in a Society consisting of twenty-five persons, that the conversation of all should be equally sprightly or intelligent; but in this, as in other clubs, there is a class of indirect contributors to the general festivity, who fill what may be termed useful under-parts at the board; like the Greek particles that, unmeaning as they appear, have their due share in the harmony and intonation of a Greek sentence. Of this class is old Walsh, who, from having sung these last thirty years an absurd song about "lambkins playing," has the prescriptive title of "Gentle Shepherd." Perhaps no man in the Sublime Society will make a chasm in it more difficult to fill up. Walsh is no slight adept in that semi-buffoonery so often observable in men of a certain standing, who are unwilling to forego the place they still retain in the societies of

younger and brisker spirits. This serves him admirably as a succedaneum for wit, while it enables others to laugh at him with little or no expenditure of ingenuity or fancy; for such a being is himself a ready-made joke. At a table assembled to laugh, Walsh, therefore, is a treasure; a soft, easy cushion for witlings to repose on, or for the inexperienced Tyro to break his first jests upon, without fear of giving offence, or of hurting a feeling. Every festive society has, more or less, a member or two of this class; men who are pleasant, but not pleasing; liked by all, but respected by none. Yet they contribute to the amount of your mirthful sensations, and from being barely tolerated at first, win their way imperceptibly with you, till your social system would seem incomplete without them. It must be by some undefineable fascination of this nature, that Walsh has pushed himself so successfully along. However that may be, he has been one of the luckiest of the sons of Adam—if by luck is meant that perverse problem in the affairs of life—a man's reaching a degree of prosperity and independence, to which, at his first setting out, it

would have been madness for him to have aspired; justled, or kicked, or pushed along by a series of mere fortuitous impulses, blindly co-operating to his advancement. Walsh is habitually a legatee. In some corner of a will, there is almost sure to lurk a snug little bequest to Walsh; not, indeed, to any considerable extent, but constituting in the aggregate, a handsome addition to his substance. The Duke of Norfolk, the late Sir John Aubrey, are far from being the only names that have in this way embalmed themselves in Walsh's remembrance.

This venerable Beef-Steaker lived through a great portion of the last century, and has dipped deeply into the present. It is a remarkable, and a meritorious part of his biography, that he began life in the humble condition of a domestic in the celebrated Lord Chesterfield's family, and that he accompanied, in the capacity of a valet, that nobleman's natural son, Mr. Philip Stanhope, on his tour through the continent. His name occurs once or twice in the Earl's Letters to his son. He was afterwards a messenger in the Secretary of State's Office, and at last a Commissioner in

the Custom-House. It was certainly not the advantages of a liberal education that gave the colour to Walsh's fortunes; nor has the circumstance been the slightest impediment to him. The late Sir Charles Bamfylde used to tell a story of Walsh with great glee. They who are versed in the criminal incidents of about forty years ago, must well remember the celebrated case of Captain Donellan, who was executed for the murder of Sir Theodosius Boughton. Donellan had been a man of gaiety and expense about town, and was embarrassed in his affairs. He had, unfortunately, a considerable reversion expectant on the baronet's demise; and this circumstance probably urged him to the deed for which he suffered. Sir Theodosius was in a languid state of health, and Donellan, who assiduously attended his sick chamber, frequently gave him his medicines, and, on one of these occasions, contrived to administer to him a phial of distilled laurel-leaf, a most deadly poison, which he had been seen to prepare. The poor young man swallowed the whole contents, and expired in a few hours. Though there could be no doubt of Donellan's guilt, it was a case of

the nicest circumstantial evidence; and Mr. Justice Buller, who tried it, is supposed to have pressed it too hardly against the prisoner. Walsh had been well acquainted with Donellan, and at his request went down to his trial, and attended him with great kindness from the goal to the Court-House. As Sir Charles was wont to relate the anecdote, Walsh placed himself close to the bar, where his unhappy friend was placed, and began explaining to him some of the ordinary solemnities that take place on these occasions. "There, Donellan," said Walsh, "there's the jury! There is the judge! If you are found guilty, he will put on a black cap, and sentence you to be hanged.' But it all depends on the jury; for they have only to say one single *monosyllable*, Guilty or not Guilty, and you will be hanged, or set at liberty."

Sir Charles was fond of relating, probably of inventing, these kind of slip-slops, and fastening them upon poor Walsh. I heard Bamfylde once say, that Walsh was seated at a dinner, when a John Dory was served up; upon which he turned round to a lady who was next to him, and asked her, if she could tell him the *botanical* name of

the fish, for that its real name could not possibly be John Dory?—At another party, Walsh was complaining that he had lately received an abusive letter, but could not tell from whom, as it had no signature. Some person inquired whether it was an anonymous letter? Walsh, who, as Bamfylde observed, knew as much about the derivation of the word *anonymous*, as he did of his own begetting, instantly replied, "Anonymous! Yes, very anonymous. It was the most anonymous letter I ever received!" For mine own part, I am inclined to suspect that these anecdotes should only be related, as specimens of the kind of banter, which Sir Charles was fond of exercising on his best friends, and in which there lurked not the smallest particle of ill-nature. During my acquaintance with Walsh, though he is by no means a lettered man, I never heard one illiterate mistake escape from his lips. He had picked up in the intercourses of a varied life enough of the idiom of good society, to qualify him for admission into it; and as the first lesson of a man of the world is to dissemble ignorance, I deem it highly improbable that he should have committed blunders, which

would have excluded him from much lower associations than those which he frequented. No man was more versed in this important science. Ulysses himself did not better deserve the epithet of πολύτροπος.

Opposite to the chair of the president, sits Harry Stephenson. His seat is prescriptive, for he is our secretary. He is a casual descendant from the late Duke of Norfolk, who educated him to the law; but that coyest of coquettes, probably, because she was not wooed with sufficient ardour, has scarcely deigned to smile upon him. It is difficult to pass him by; but to paint him as he is, would exceed the powers of any pencil, and would demand more varieties of tint, and stronger contrasts of colouring, than verbal description can summon to its aid.

"Quo teneam nodo mutantem Protea vultus?"

He is a mass of excellent endowments, each contrasted with its corresponding fault. He is, however, chiefly remarkable for carrying the Beef-Steak style, of which the legitimate scope is most ample, to its farthest extreme of licen-

tiousness. He approaches almost to Cynicism. "It is a cur," said Cobb, "that will worry when he can, but if he cannot worry he will bark. He spares no man; and he is of the greatest use in being set at new members, or candidates for admission; for his attack, if patiently borne, is the surest criterion of the most passive and serene temperament, that the Beef-Steaks requires in its members." Introduced by the Duke of Norfolk into the Society, at a somewhat earlier age than usual, he soon became a sort of spoiled child there; and, by a mistake incident to inexperience, imagined that the indulgence shown to youthful petulance, was the homage paid to superiority of talent. In this he is, indeed, far from being deficient; but it is of the kind which Nature serves out in wholesale quantities; a tolerably sound, but every-day understanding.

It is no easy matter to brush Harry Stephenson off when he assails you; for it is an insect that makes up for feebleness of sting by reiteration of attack, and is, for that reason, rather troublesome than hurtful. Harry's coarseness on one occasion lost an excellent and worthy

member—an eminent physician, and a man of great classical erudition. In a gross perversion of the humour of the Society, and a misconception equally gross of the convivial habits of polished life, Harry gave him the odious and annoying name of Doctor E—, the most hateful combination of letters that has ever been chalked on the walls of London and her suburbs. The adhesiveness of any nickname is proverbial. The mortification was too much, and he left us. Yet, in many other respects, Harry is by no means wanting in discretion. In the household of the Duke of Sussex, where he has for some years acted as comptroller, he has been of incalculable service to his royal friend and master; having nearly, if not wholly, liberated that excellent Prince from the encumbrances into which a generous nature, and the exigencies of his elevated rank, had unwarily, and almost necessarily, misled him. Well managed by others, or influenced by a sterner self-restraint, Harry would be a most invaluable member of our board. As it is, his place could not be supplied.

From these portraitures, which are, and must

be imperfect, and curtailed of many of their just lineaments and proportions, by the respect due both to dead and to living names, some idea, at least, may be formed of the Beef-Steak groupe.

But there are many others in this galaxy of convivial spirits, who shine, perhaps, with a more temperate radiance ;—men who, though they do not much contribute to the festivity of the social hour, by sparkling sallies of wit, or successful exertions of banter, keep alive the union, the harmony, the good-will of the board, by the softer qualities, and the gentler manners, that render private life at once pleasant and secure ;—men who, to use the beautiful phrase of Burke, are "the soft green of the soul," on which we linger with delight. One of these has for some years been lost to us. He was a man of cultivated taste; a passionate idolater of music; and endued with a genuine, though somewhat eccentric, style of humour; and this seemed chastened and rebuked by a certain melancholy, that was more germane to his feelings, and tinged, in some degree, his mirth. Domestic misfortune weighed heavily upon him. He stood condemned by the

rash sentence of a world, that always misjudges those whom it does not know. No appeal lay from it but to the inward suffrage of his own bosom, and to the very few friends who were acquainted with that tale of sorrow. It is of the late Lord Viscount Kirkwall that I speak. He assured me one evening, that the few happy moments that his fate seemed not to grudge him, were passed with us at the Beef-Steaks.

In this class, also, may be placed Rowland Stephenson, the most respectable of bankers. Never did a clearer head, and a better heart, meet together; nor does the heart wait, as it does, in ordinary cases, a cold and calculating lesson from the head; but the most spontaneous and generous impulses of the one, are ratified by the cool decisions of the other. "Never," as Hamlet says, "were the blood and judgment so well commingled."

At the same table, too, sits Dennison, the worthy member for Surrey; a man of cheerful gravity, an excellent companion, admirable as a Beef-Steaker, and amiable in every other human relation. Commerce never boasted of a brighter ornament. Well might she silence the foolish

gabble of those, who think that commerce implies, necessarily, narrowness of heart, or a sordid self-centered appetency of gain, or an indifference to the calamities and sufferings of the whole race of man—by bringing forward to shame and refute it, such a man as Dennison. Nor is he less to be venerated in the other aspect, in which you may contemplate his character;—that of the country gentleman; the kind and liberal landlord; the upright magistrate; the lover and protector of the cottager and the peasant!

Such is this renowned and ancient Society, whose elements are so curiously mixed, and in the nicest and most exquisite proportions; interposing amidst the vexations of existence, the feverish pursuits of ambition, and its fretful disappointments, a few hours of unmingled *pleasaunce*, for the heart to repose from its burdens, and to pour out, amidst wine, and song, and merriment, the unrebuked, unfettered effusions of its gladness. Such a Society, of high antiquity, compared with the thousand ephemeral combinations called CLUBS, unites, within itself the perpetual animation of youth, and the adult strength

of near a century's growth. The hilarity, the wit, the mirth of each succeeding generation, are the seeds of its conservation. I shall conclude my rapid, but I trust authentic, sketch of it, with an aspiration not unbecoming the piety of one of its children.—ESTO PERPETUA!

II.

LITERARY AND BLUE-STOCKING CLUBS.

If there be any pleasure in contrast, my reader shall now enjoy it. In transition from the ancient, genial fraternity, whose memoirs I have just attempted to transcribe, and in which the genuine Club-spirit has resided, like an imprisoned essence, for the best part of a century, I shall proceed to give some account of a *soi-disant* Literary Club, which, perhaps, may answer equally well as a description of many other assemblies of the same class. Of all solemn bores, these learned Clubs are the most oppressive: they have little or no admixture of the natural and characteristic humours of man: the mind never sits there in its dishabille, but struts and marches in full-dressed coxcombry. So much talking, and so little said! Every one

failing, because every one is attempting; in a word, so little of the Club-feeling, which demands the postponement of our petty self-loves to the general gratification, and strikes only in unison with the feelings and sentiments of all!

Literary Societies, therefore, had long sickened me, and I had resolved to keep clear of them for the residue of my natural life. But see the inanity of human vows! I was strongly urged not long ago by a friend, whom I highly value, to dine with him at a certain Club, consisting only of literary men, each of whom had written volumes, and had been registered high in the tablets of fame, and he promised me an intellectual treat of the highest order. Though long habits of thinking had made me diffident of such dainties, in a weak moment I consented, and accompanied him, that very day, to the Thatched-House in St. James's Street.

Gladly would I have retracted, for it shortly afterwards recurred to me, that my own dinner, on that day, was a select miscellany, precisely corresponding to my most cherished likings. In her amiable reminiscence of all that ministers to my

comforts, my better half, having noted on my lips sundry approving ejaculations at one or two dishes, dressed in superior taste, at some tables where we had lately dined, had enlarged her neat and frugal repast, by an innocent plagiary from what she had observed me to admire. Besides, I could always, in my own house, rely on finding a snug bottle of pleasing Port, a tranquillizing refuge from a moderate dinner, but a most exquisite consummation to a good one. It was that very wine which used to inspire my friend, Jack Taylor, with the same invariable bad pun, *Inveni portum*, as he put out his hand to the decanter.

As for the sensual part of the literary banquet, I had some sinister forebodings of its turning out a woeful contrast to the nicely elaborated delicacies, and the honest Port, that awaited me at home. Nor was I wrong. Willis did not think it became him to furnish a very good dinner to gentlemen, whose wonted diet is with the Gods. It seemed to consist of memorandums of several by-gone entertainments, warmed up again, and retaining the semblance of what they once were, though their flavour and quality had walked

quietly off in the process. As for the wine, he gave us the inferior quality which, I am told, he keeps expressly for such parties, and which those who frequent his house, have christened "the Philosopher's Port." It had, to say the truth, a strong dash of philosophy or something else in it.

And who can blame him for not dispensing his best wines to palates too unpractised to give them "homage due?" Then it was, that my little domestic preparations, and my own bottle of quiet Port, from which I had been so wanton a recreant, rushed upbraidingly on my recollection! But stop till the cloth is removed. Then for the corruscation and play of intellect; the electric flash of wit; the condensed sententious wisdom; those gentle and fertilizing distillations, that fall from the lips of highly-gifted men, when they pause from their severer studies in pleasing converse with congenial spirits. Nothing of this. The master-minds of the age talked, debated, and prosed; but not a word was uttered that was worth remembering. It might be a feast of reason, but it was fit only for a Barme-

cide. Nothing was served up at it, but the husks and shells of old, worn-out subjects; nor did the epigrammatic terseness in which they were expressed, atone for their staleness and vulgarity. It was Dulness herself presiding at her most chosen rites. Whether it was from her leaden influence, or that of the philosophic Port—I returned yawning home, feelingly convinced, that if literary men could make books, they were quite incompetent to make Clubs.

Is it not a provoking problem, or rather a mortifying truth, that parties of this kind should, at least ten times in twelve, turn out stupid and uninstructive? Is it that they speak more from books than from themselves; that they are given too much to pamphlet-speaking, a most unequal tribute levied on human patience, and a direct breach of the great tact of conversation, which is a touch-and-go sort of affair? At the Thatched-House, on that occasion, no man's mind seemed to repose in its careless and unfettered attitudes; and I remarked that every talker was evidently anxious to assemble every thing that could sustain his proposition. Never shall

I forget the panic I felt when a privileged proser, preparing to explain that most delightful question —the currency—said, he must be permitted to consider it upon three distinct grounds. But, God help him! he did not stop for permission, and off he set with the most complete dulness prepense. What could be more appalling than the certainty of having one's attention lugged along by a true-bred proser going over his three grounds? It is like travelling in an open country, and seeing the mile-stones ranged in a straight line before you, without a hedge or a turning to cheat you of the distance.

This literature of ours, that we are, perhaps, justly proud of, much as it may improve and embellish the general society of mankind, does not act so propitiously upon our little coteries; and, when the mania breaks into our family circles, it substitutes for the smiling household charities, the graceful harmonies that render private life sweet and wholesome, a thousand pedantries and affectations: I am a little sore on this point. For, whilst the smack of the philosophic Port was yet recent in my mouth, and the

din of the prosing still buzzing in my ear, I was hooked into an engagement, which I would willingly have declined, could I have made head against the tyranny of etiquette, which was quite against me, and the decision of a cabinet council, where my wife and daughters had already determined the point. It was to dine with a literary banker in the city, and his no less literary wife; and, as a whet for the intellectual treat in reserve for me, care was taken to let me know that the lady had written an article upon political economy in one of the Reviews. At dinner, besides the *highly talented* (if I must use the barbarism) host and hostess, were three or four of those would-be-clever-if-they-could men, as Jeremy Bentham would call them, who have scraped together a good deal of literary jargon, by means of lectures, institutes, reviews, and other kinds of machinery for the abridgment of mental labour; and who, by eternal fluttering about a Blue Woman, are the main contributors, next to her own vanity, to the making her a finished, ineffable bore. As for the dinner itself, it neither displayed vulgar plenty, nor elegant tenuity; a

matter which, like Henry VII., when they voted him an insufficient subsidy, I "rather noted," to use Lord Bacon's phrase, "than liked."

But the conversation was disgusting beyond measure; for it began with a satirical mention of one or two of my dearest friends, whom I knew to be highly gifted, and in point of intellectual elevation, lifted immeasurably above the loftiest ken of the gabbling coxcombs, who presumed to sit in judgment upon them.

"Yes," said the lady, "I was sadly disappointed with H——; I could not draw him out. I tried him upon twenty topics, but he was incorrigibly stupid."

"Stupid!" I murmured to myself; but contempt came to the relief of my indignation. Oh the cross-purposes, the contradictions in this carnival of life! That your palmy, luxuriant genius, my valued H——, your wakeful, exquisite sense of all that is fair and good, vibrating tremblingly on the nerve, "where agony is born"—your unuttered, because unutterable loathing of all deformity in morals, or in letters, and especially of the cant and impudence of female

pedants;—your finished taste, on which, as in the purest mirror, virtue, truth, and literature throw their brightest reflections;—that your high desert—your rich, flourishing intellect, attracted by instinct and feeling towards all that is lovely and decorous in the universe—that these should be pawed, and handled, and criticised by this predestinated she-blockhead!

I sat some time near the Blue in silence; and knowing that silence, in the vocabulary of these women, passes for stupidity, thought myself secure. But I had reckoned without my hostess. I was engaged in a rough controversy with the limb of an "unwedgeable and gnarled" fowl, for which somebody had applied, when she brought me instantly to, by firing a question at me, that made the weapon fall from my hands, as I was performing the mutilation.

"Pray can you tell me," said she, "how long the Argonautic expedition was before the siege of Troy?"

I answered rather doggedly, that if she would tell me the exact date of the siege, I would endeavour to compute that of the expedition. But

she did not seem deeply versed in the calculations of Newton, or Freret, but went on about Apollonius Rhodius, whose poem she had been reading, but did not say whether in the original, or in Fawkes's translation, leaving us to infer that she had read the author in Greek. By the way, was it not Rogers, or some other incorrigible punster, who, when some Scotch people were extolling M'Adam's roads, and exclaiming, that had he lived in one of the ancient republics, public honours would have been decreed to him, slily remarked; "Yes, they would have called him Apollonius of Rhodes."

When I got home, I swore (the oath is registered in heaven) that I would never again sit down with a Blue Woman. It may be difficult, I said, to get a camel through the eye of a needle, but it shall be just as difficult to get me into Threadneedle Street again. My girls, who had watched the symptoms of disgust and wearisomeness which I had brought back with me, asked me how I could be insensible to the charms of Mrs. ——'s conversation? I felt the subject at my heart. They had been well educated within

the range of female acquirements. I trembled lest their sound and unperverted understandings should be tinged with the fainted hues of bluism;—that, tempted by such examples, they should overleap the decent boundary that reason, custom, and good taste have prescribed to the intellectual aspirings of their sex. Mrs. ——, therefore, served me for a sort of clinical lecture.

"I am not surprised," I said, "that your inexperience should have led you to imagine the homage she apparently receives, to be the tribute justly levied by her genius and learning. I shall shock you by saying, that she is deficient in both. In her youth, she had a natural smartness, like Miss Never-out's in Swift's Polite Conversations. But that is all. It must have been some demon that whispered to her, 'Set up for a *belle-esprit*.' Her reading is slight and desultory. You know not yet the facility with which false literary pretences pass off. A dashing off-hand habit of interposing an opinion on every topic, a promptitude in gathering up the odds and ends of other people's remarks, and hazarding them as her own—this went a great way to establish her. No one ques-

tions female pretensions; they are conceded by your sex through ignorance, and from gallantry by ours. She has, indeed, some dexterity in escaping out of her almost perpet l blunders, and Mrs. Malapropisms; yet, what but the grossest flattery should have cradled her in these strange literary illusions, and seduced her into her ridiculous and insane conviction of her own erudition? I am out of patience. Whip me these accursed flatterers!

"Yet, if she had had certificates from every university in Europe, I should be slow to admit her proud pretensions to taste and genius; for she has no heart, unless that cold, withered part of her anatomy be called one, which throbs but for herself; which is stone-dead to every other affection; which never knew a charity, but that which both begins and ends at home, nor ever beat one pulsation the quicker for sufferings that did not affect herself. Is it a paradox, that good feeling and genius are inseparable? No: to divorce them is so far forth to repeal the ordinances of God.

"I hate the pedantry of definition, and who yet

has defined what genius is? But what is it, or why was it given, if it remains a bleak, barren waste, where the social charities wither and will not grow; if it does not instinctively propel us to concur in the grand harmony which results from mutual love, mutual sympathy, mutual pity—the golden cords that connect us with Heaven? And what is woman when the kindly affections have not their accustomed altar in her bosom? What is she under the feverish influence of a false ambition, mingling in pursuits, and emulous of a fame alike alien from her destination, and her duty? What even are her triumphs, but those of a deserter, who has stolen away from his lawful camp, and whose victories are his disgraces? What does she aspire after? Has not Providence benignantly planted her in the smiling paradise of domestic love, transmuting, by a precious alchemy, even her labours and her sufferings into delights?

The fit was on me, and I should have proceeded, but I perceived a fair dissentient ready to cut short my tirade, by reminding me of many females of our day, high in letters, and in virtue. I explained. Such women as those she men-

tioned were not to be confounded with the coxcombs in sarcenet, who enter into discussions they do not understand, handle words they cannot pronounce, and talk of books, of which they have read no more than the titles. The late venerable Mrs. Barbauld, Lady Dacre, Mrs. Tighe, Mrs. Hemans — to these distinguished women, he must be a blind stickler for male prerogative, who would deny their undoubted superiority. I have been in the society of each. They entered with ease and unaffected grace into the casual conversation of the moment; made their remarks with simplicity, and said nothing for the sake of effect; showing the utmost tolerance to others, and with sweet and encouraging smiles helping on the young and the diffident. Real knowledge fed the thoughts and the fancies of these ladies. They were never like Mrs. ——, driven to the desperate resource of reading in the morning, and then forcing on the topic in the evening. Here ended my lecture.

But if the above be the character of *many* of the literary meetings of the day, it will not apply to *all*; for no doubt there are Clubs thus styled

in London, and elsewhere, where the love and knowledge of letters, wisdom qualified by urbanity, and learning enlivened by the gaiety of social mirth, are to be recognised in their best aspects. One such is in my recollection at this moment; but it was not situated in London; and, I fear, I shall contradict the title of the present work, even by a brief allusion to a country Club. Yet, as a sketch of the one in question would include a few reminiscences of two or three characters of celebrity in literature, I am tempted to proceed, and trust to my reader's pardon for the digression.

Never shall I forget the Hole-in-the-Wall Club, which flourished some twenty-five years ago, at Norwich; a place, perhaps, of all our country towns, the least corrupted by metropolitan infusions, because it is situated within an angle of the island, and, being no outlet to continental travellers, is not overrun by the crowds, whom London is constantly sending forth on their various schemes of curiosity or pleasure.

Yet, while it is uninfested by cocknies, it has the advantage also of nurturing within its bosom many of the pleasantest groupes and associations

with which human life is enlivened. The clergy are a tolerant, enlightened, and agreeable body; and the Close, which is scarcely tenanted but by clerical characters, is a sort of miniature Athens, where, in your morning walks, you may imbibe the wisdom of the Stoa, or indulge in the splendid dreams of the academy; for there is always some lettered and classic companion to be met with, who will be glad to impart to you, though unostentatiously, the fruit of his lucubrations.

Many of the hearty, social usages of our forefathers, have long been hermetically sealed up at Norwich, and kept unmixed with the baser matter, which, in other places, foppery and fashion have infused. The native genuine humour of England flows there, as a living brook, unstained and pure. It is not reluctantly forced to play through artificial pipes and conductors; an advantage in the moral picturesque, not inferior to that which the poet has so delightfully depictured in the natural:—

"Quanto præstantius esset
Numen aquæ, viridi si margine cluderet undas,
Herba, nec ingenuum violarent marmora tophum."

At that Club sate Dr. Frank Sayers,* a poet of no mean inspiration, a sound antiquarian, an elegant scholar, and an accomplished gentleman. His accustomed chair was kept every Monday for him, and it would have been a profanation had any other occupant filled it. In sooth, he was a man of admirable fun; and the characters around him, which no skill of selection could have got together in any other Club, or in any other town, afforded unfailing supplies to his innocent and unwounding pleasantry.

Among these, there was a strange oddity—a fellow of much local and some municipal importance, an alderman of the city—a most curious specimen of provincial singularity, serving Sayers at once with food for his honest mirth, and materials for philosophical speculation. No lecturer at Guy's, or St. Bartholemew's, could

* The accomplished author of the Dramatic Sketches from the Ancient Northern Mythology. His life, an invaluable piece of biography, has been lately written by his friend, William Taylor, a member of that Club, who transcribed it from the tablets of his heart.—See *Quarterly Review*, No. LXIX., for Southey's review of it.

have made more of him; had he been an anatomical preparation. He handed him about, so as to enable every one to enter thoroughly into the most entertaining of living anomalies; and in such a wise, as to amuse and delight the man himself with the good-humoured exhibition of his own absurdities.

One of these absurdities was this. In middle age, the creature was seized with the strange ambition of studying modern history, and descending the stream of events to his own time. For this purpose, he determined never to look at the newspapers of the day, in order, as he said, to have the complete political concatenation unbroken in his memory. *One hour in the day* was all that he could devote to his study; but so regular and habitual was it, that twenty years had made him a tolerable proficient in that part of history which preceded the French revolution. He was, however, with all his industry, several years behind the march of events; for, at the breaking out of that revolution, he had got no farther than the seven years war; and, when the attention of all mankind hung fearfully suspended on the pro-

gress of Clairfait, and the success of Dumourier, he was lingering in the camp of the great Frederick, and following, with breathless perturbation, the fortunes of the high-minded Maria Theresa. Even so late as the disastrous day of Ulm, when every eye was fixed on the cloud that blackened the horizon of human freedom, all his regrets and sympathies were centered in the disgraceful treaty of Closterseven.

But some undefinable fatality seemed to hang over our worthy citizen's reading—for he unconsciously imbibed the popular passions of the period he was perusing; so that, historically speaking, he was a staunch Whig, and a hot patriot, in the intensity of those designations; whilst in actual practice, he was the most thorough-going of the Church-and-King men of the day, and overflowed with the frothy fervour of the obtrusive and troublesome loyalty, which was then in such fashion. Thus, he was ready for the meanest job to serve the very King, whom he had perhaps reviled and detested in the letters of Junius; and after raving, in his historical hour, with Wilkes and Beckford against general war-

rants, he was for committing to prison every drunken fellow who might abuse the church, or d—n the King over his porter, and encouraging, if not cheering, the loyal mobs that were pulling down the houses of republicans and dissenters.

This strange combination * of retrospective patriotism, and actual servility, furnished Sayers with abundant satire at the expense of the alderman. In allusion to the hour, which this worthy devoted in each day to his studies, he remarked, that Mr. Alderman B—— was right as far as he had read; but his intellect had gone down at that point, and like a watch that had stopped, became right only once in twenty-four hours.

Amongst other eccentric frequenters of the

* Burke, in one of his early tracts, seems to have had in view this sort of character. "We are very uncorrupt and tolerably enlightened judges of past ages, where no passions deceive, and the whole train of circumstances, from the trifling cause to the tragical event, is set before us. Few are the partisans of departed tyranny; and to be a Whig on the business of an hundred years ago, is very consistent with every advantage of present servility."—*Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, 1768.

Hole-in-the-Wall, was Ozias Linley, a minor canon of the cathedral, and Sheridan's brother-in-law. He was subject, beyond any one living, to fits of absence. He out-Parson-Adamized Parson Adams. He was a *travesti* of the Cambridge George Harvest, of whom Jortin has so many good anecdotes. One Sunday morning, as he was riding through the Close, on his way to serve his curacy, his horse threw off a shoe. A lady, whom he had just passed, having remarked it, called out to him, "Sir, your horse has just cast one of his shoes." "Thank you, Madam," returned Ozias, "will you then be kind enough to put it on?" In preaching, he often turned over two or three pages at once of his sermon; and, when an universal titter and stare convinced him of the transition, he observed coolly—"I find I have omitted a considerable part of my sermon, but it is not worth going back for," and then went on to the conclusion.

Upon another occasion, having dismounted in the course of his journey, for the purpose of exercise, he hung his horse's bridle on his arm, concluding that he would follow; but the bridle

had been put on carelessly, and the animal having disengaged it from his head, began to brouze very comfortably, and at his leisure. In the meanwhile, Linley walked on, the bridle still on his arm, to a turnpike-gate, where he offered the usual payment for his horse. The man seeing no horse, but only a bridle, began staring at the poor canon, whom he took for a maniac; and it was several minutes, before Linley would suffer himself to be convinced, that it was only a bridle that he had in his hand, and that his horse was not following.

In his more vernal days, Hudson Gurney*, was wont to solace himself in the snug Club-Room of the Hole-in-the-Wall, and to bask in the sunshine of Sayers's festive conversation. His own heart, too, at that time, beat high with frolic and hilarity. Hudson's was, from his earliest prime, a clear, distinguishing intellect. He was an elegantly-read man; and his poetry, no fragment of which is in print, except his admirable translation of the Cupid and Psyche of Apuleius

* M. P. for Newport, Isle of Wight,

into English verse, was by no means of a secondary kind. Nursed from childhood in the lap of Fortune, nothing has ever been more foreign from his nature than the usual capriciousness, and waywardness, peculiar to her spoiled children. His wealth is chiefly expended upon the luxuries of the heart; in raising the fallen; in comforting the afflicted: and never was one sullen or fitful vapour of spleen or unkindness observed to shadow, even for a moment, the shining, unvaried disk of his benevolence. But I must stop. There is not space here for the anthology of his virtues.

There, too, William Taylor smoked his evening pipe, and lost himself in the cloudier fumes of German metaphysics, and German philology. Taylor's translation of Bürger's Leonora will, probably, survive the original. His reading was unlimited; but it principally consisted of books that were not readable. His most amusing quality, however, (and it was that which kept an undying grin upon the laughter-loving face of Sayers) was his everlasting love of hypothesis; and it was impossible to withstand the imperturbable gravity with which he put forth his wild

German paradoxes, fresh from the mint of Weimar and Leipsig.

How he made the Club stare, as he proved to them that Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain, consisted of immense hail-stones, that fell there in a storm 2000 years ago, and became petrified by long exposure to the air! How gravely, and as if from the purest conviction, did he assert that Norgate's mind (a gentleman who had taken a house in the Close), by the certain laws of mental pathology, had become enlarged from the time that he had lived near the cathedral, and expanded from habitual contemplation of the massy pile within his view! How sincerely and unaffectedly—(not as a sophist, or a paradox-monger, who draws a complacency from his own ingenuity in defending his own absurdities, but in right earnest)—did he prove to the thorough dissatisfaction of those who knew not how to confute him, and to the unspeakable amusement of those who thought it not worth their while,—and that too, by a chemical analysis of colours, and the processes by which animal heat and organic structure affect them,—that the first race of

mankind were green! Green, he said, was the primal colour of vegetable existence—the first raiment in which Nature leaped into existence; the colour on which the eye loved to repose; and, in the primeval state, the first quality that attracted man to man, and bound him up in the circles of those tender charities and affinities which kept the early societies of the race together.

Yet these eccentricities never derogated from the respect in which he was held, for the depth and diffusion of his knowledge; least of all, from the affection which was cherished for his virtues in every bosom worthy of a communion with his own. Taylor was the best of sons, the best of friends.

But Sayers! Sayers was the soul of this little Club; and when he died, its whim, its gaiety, all fell with him. After his death, a few persons entered the room—smoked a melancholy pipe or two—said little—looked wistfully at his empty chair—and came no more. He was a man of a natural and arch humour, with none of the offensive pretensions of a systematic wit. I re-

member, at a meeting of the directors of the Norwich Public Library, when somebody proposed (it was during the fitful changes of the French Government, in the bad times of the revolution,) to order a copy of the last new French constitution, Sayers remarking, with great gravity, that they had established a rule not to admit any more *periodical* publications. A military fop called on him one day at his lodgings, and criticizing the smallness of his apartment, remarked, that there was not room in it to swing a cat. "Why, then," said Sayers, "it is quite big enough for me, for I never swing cats!"

Sayers's disquisitions have been lately republished. They are written in a style at once simple and elegant, and exactly corresponding to the subjects on which he discourses.

III.

THE KING OF CLUBS.

THIS was a fanciful title given to a Club set on foot about the year 1801. Its founder was Bobus Smith (himself a Club), who gave it that whimsical designation. I am speaking of Robert Smith, the late Advocate-General of Calcutta, the friend and contemporary of Canning, at Eton, and his coadjutor in that promising specimen of school-boy talent—the Microcosm. The Club, at its first institution, consisted of a small knot of lawyers, whose clients were too few, or too civil to molest their after-dinner recreations; a few literary characters, and a small number of visitors, generally introduced by those who took the chief part in conversation, and seemingly selected for the faculty of being good listeners.

The King of Clubs sat on the Saturday of each month at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand, which, at that time, was a nest of boxes, each containing its Club, and affording excellent cheer, though lately desecrated by indifferent dinners and very questionable wine. The Club was a grand talk. Every one seemed anxious to bring his contribution of good sense, or good humour, and diffused himself over books and authors, and the prevalent topics of the day.

Politics were, by a salutary proviso, quite excluded. Sometimes the conversation rose to the higher moods of philosophical discussion; and there were one or two who "found no end in wandering mazes lost," and made us yawn and betake ourselves to our rappee, whilst they discoursed highly of mind and matter, of first and secondary causation, of the systems of Empedocles, Lucretius, Cicero, and Galen.

I esteemed myself singularly fortunate in being one of its earliest members;—for it was amongst the most restless aspirations of my youth, to enjoy the converse of older and wiser men. Of

those who frequented the Club, Bobus* in every respect, but that of wine, (for he was but a frigid worshipper of Bacchus) was the most convivial. He has left in my mind the most vivid recollections of his infinite pleasantry; he had great humour, and a species of wit, that revelled amidst the strangest and most grotesque combinations. His manner was at that time somewhat of the bow-wow kind; and when he pounced upon a disputatious and dull blockhead, he made sad work of him. But he was the merriest man there, (for upon the whole it was somewhat of a grave concern) and that will sufficiently account for his having lived so long in my recollection.

Then there was Richard Sharpe, a partner of Boddington's West India House, and, subsequently a Member of Parliament during Addington's and Percival's administrations. By constitutional temperament, and the peculiar quality of his understanding, he was a thinker, and a reasoner. He was occasionally controversial; but he had an overflowing fund both of useful

* This was a nick-name given him at Eton, and it will adhere to him even after death.

and agreeable knowledge, and an unfailing stream of delightful illustration. Sharpe, when he first went into Parliament, excited the warmest expectations of those, who, by an absurdity that is very common, predict, from any unusual vigour of social talent, the highest degrees of senatorial success,—all the triumphs of the House of Commons from a neat and felicitous style of discussion at table. When there, he was quite transplanted, adding another to the long list which daily experience registers of the temerity of that vulgar inference. He spoke; he was listened to; but neither extensive information, nor solid erudition, nor sparkling vivacity, nor the condensed weight of all the ratiocination, with which the mind of man can be overcharged, so as to bear down all before him in the private circle, and triumph at will in all its petty warfare, can gain an audience amidst the storm and whirlwind of those great controversies, upon which the hopes and fears of a nation are suspended.

The House of Commons!—it is a sea strewed with the mightiest wrecks. It is an arena in which the proudest strength has faltered, and the

firmest confidence grown pale. Bobus himself spoke once, and once only in that assembly, and failed. He retired a maimed and crippled gladiator from a conflict, in which minds immeasurably inferior have been victorious. Such are the laws by which genius itself is rebuked; such the despotism beneath which the highest and palmiest faculties are compelled to veil their head, however honoured, however flattered, or wreathed and garlanded by academic renown. How is this? A volume might be written, and the problem still remain unsolved.

Is it that there is sometimes a certain amount of reputation already secured by the general suffrage, and backed and sustained by an inward conscience, that it has been justly earned; which, running before a man, and telling his story before he enters that house, and telling it too with the fervid exaggeration of private friendship —becomes a pressure upon sensitive minds, a drag-chain that impedes and deadens them in their career? Pre-existing fame operates as a vehement incentive not to sink beneath it, and, as in our corporeal economy, all our powerful

incentives are followed by counteracting debilities, our mental constitution is subject also to the same condition; and the result is, that the man is borne down by the same buoyant and ambitious wave that lifted him up. A single failure closes the account; and the unhappy adventurer, though under the rightful conviction that he has failed from no defect of the same talent that has carried hundreds onwards without check or impediment—in the full internal assurance that his intellectual cruise lacked no oil—that he had eloquence and matter at his call—all that could sustain his argument—wit and imagination in a heaped measure to adorn it—learning sufficient to make his discourse like a stream flowing over golden sands,—is compelled to sit down amidst all these flatteries of the heart, the intellect, the conscience, in affright and despair, left alone to the gloomy family of his own reflections—those reflections which were wont to be a smiling groupe; and which, as he joyed over his own attainments, and his own powers, ministered to him the purest and sweetest of satisfactions.

In truth, this House of Commons (I am speaking of its better days) will tolerate your absolute bore, provided he brings to his subject a competent contribution of good sense and information. Such a being has often triumphed. He gets up; he disdains, or rather through a peculiar felicity of his nervous system, he does not feel the first symptoms of repugnance he has to encounter: the half-suppressed yawn, but so suppressed as to render it the more audible; the ominous banging of the green door, that gives you pretty strong hints that you are likely to have only the Speaker and the Serjeant-at-Arms for your audience; the cough, ambushed in the Members' Gallery, emitted from lungs that seem to have economized a month's inflation for one explosion; still he persists, till he gets the ear and the nod of a few intelligent persons, anxious to obtain information upon the question; he is heard, and perhaps applauded. Then, at the close of the debate, he scarcely feels the ground, as he walks through the waiting-room; he ascends his carriage, and sleeps amidst dreams that still murmur with the approbation he has

been fortunate enough to obtain from the most fastidious assemblage of critics in the world.

It is strange, but still not inexplicable. The man deceived no expectation, for he never excited any. It is all sheer gain to him, for he had little or nothing to hazard. Had he broken down, he would have been only where he was before; he would have lost no reputation, but might have retired to his family, or his Club, as great a man as ever. He might have remained still the undisputed oracle of his neighbourhood, or laid down the law at his table, to the perfect conviction of the butler, fixed in mute astonishment at his genius.

Whereas, a highly-gifted being, who has exhausted all the stores of learning, scholastic and polite—grown pale, perhaps, over the midnight lamp, and set a thousand tongues in motion to yelp out his literary and social triumphs—when such a man makes his first effort, unsuccessfully, before that formidable host, but few of whom could assign a single reason for deeming that effort a failure, then rush forth, like unimprisoned tempests, envy, and the whole tribe of

kindred feelings, which solace the little for the overthrow of the great, and the unsuccessful aspirant is heard no more. He may talk, for the rest of his parliamentary existence, good sense in the committee-rooms, set the country gentleman right, and be of much quiet utility. But he has failed as a debater; he has lost the race with all the odds in his favour: the swift-footed Salius outstripped by the beardless Euryalus—Menander conquered by Philemon, with whom, an hour or two before, he would have scorned a competition.

I have lived long enough to witness many similar exemplifications of the fallacy of our estimates. In truth, the House of Commons is a test too severe for the sensitiveness of real genius. It is exposing the gilded gondola, whose oars, dashing upon the unruffled canal to the melody of voices, and the music of instruments, carried her exultingly along—it is exposing her to the rude and shifting gales of the Adriatic. I have, in imagination, followed the unsuccessful man of talent to his troubled couch, his month's preparation of graceful eloquence, worse than lost, and

all his aspirings perhaps quenched for ever; and I have thought of cities laid waste, and overthrown; and of Servius Sulpicius's letter to Cicero, detailing his melancholy, but beautiful reflections on the ruins of Megara and Corinth, and other places, swallowed up in that grave of empires, where there is no more knowledge, and no more devices.

Richard Sharpe was, I think, in acuteness and penetration, confessedly the first of the King of Clubs. He indulged but rarely in pleasantry; but when any thing of the kind escaped him, it was sure to tell. It delighted us all by its unexpectedness. I remember one evening, when we were talking about Tweddel,* then a student in the Temple, who had distinguished himself over every competitor at Cambridge, had carried off every prize, and was the senior wrangler,

* He travelled into Greece, to explore the antiquities of that interesting country, and died at Athens—*Athenis suis*—as was inscribed upon his tomb. He was buried in the Temple of Theseus. His "*Prolusiones*," a youthful work, was afterwards published, with a biographical notice, by his brother.

and medalist of his year. Tweddel was not a little intoxicated with his university triumphs. Some one happened to remark, that his head was quite turned by his academic honours, and that, in the circles of the metropolis, he was wont to assume an air, and tone of superiority, which did not rightfully belong, and was by no means cordially conceded, to him. "Poor fellow!" exclaimed Sharpe, "he will soon find that his Cambridge medals will not pass as current coin in London."

I cannot call to my recollection every name that stood upon our list. The Club still exists, and boasts amongst its members, Lord Holland, Lord Lansdowne, and several men of rank and talent. But, at the period to which I refer, the most frequent attendants, besides Sharpe, Bobus Smith, and Mackintosh, were Scarlett (the present Attorney-General), Sam Rogers, the Pleasures of Memory Rogers, honest John Allen, brother of the bluest of blues, (Lady Mackintosh) M. Dumont, a French emigrant of distinction, the friend and correspondent of the Abbé de Lisle, author of *Les Jardins*, whose verses he was some-

what apt to recite, with most interminable perseverance, in spite of yawns, and other symptoms of dislike, which his own politeness (for he was a highly-bred man) forbade him to interpret into the absence of it in others.

In this respect, however, he was outdone by Wishart, who was nothing but quotation, and whose prosing, when he did converse, was like the torpedo's touch to all pleasing and lively converse; and by Charles Butler, who, having seen, in the course of a lengthened life, a vast variety of character, had treasured up a considerable assortment of reminiscences, which, when once set a-going, came out like a torrent upon you. It was a sort of shower-bath, that inundated you the moment you pulled the string.

These were all men of extensive reading, and some of profound erudition. Yet, as a Club, it was somewhat too literary; and the conversation was such, as to exclude the topics, out of which the thin and many-coloured tissue of light and flowing talk is spun in more micellaneous societies; it gave the professed talkers too much opportunity of wasting the hours of easy

and elegant recreation in verbal disputes, and metaphysical refinements; a long and tedious citation from books, which they had committed to memory in the morning, for the colloquy of the evening. How *we* (that is the younger and more social members) used to bite our lips in pure vexation, and, staring in each others faces,

"Sit in sad civility and hear."

We felt it as an abominable shame, that the short season we could spare from the still-recurring round of our morning labours, should entail on us this voluntary taxation of our jaded faculties, after they had run their stage, and required to be unharnessed, or, if called out, to be exercised merely in the short and easy excursions of the table.

But our circle was often enlarged by visitors, and their attendance was so frequent, that some of them might be considered as actual members. They sometimes brought us accessions of lively and various constitution, and it was a dull evening without them. Lord Erskine, then Mr.

Erskine, the leader of the English bar, and its pride and glory at that time, came not unfrequently amongst us, to enjoy an hour or two, stolen from his immense and overflowing business.

It is a pardonable digression, if it can be deemed a digression, to say a little of this great man; for such he must be esteemed by every one who is capable of taking a full length view of a most singular and gifted mind—a mind, to whose endowments, and a character, to whose good qualities, there has been of late a growing insensibility. For I am afraid, that the "*extinctus amabitur*, the posthumous affection which sometimes repays with usury the neglect of living reputation, that even this pittance is denied to Lord Erskine. Certainly, his closing day fell in mists and in cloudiness, and was ill-suited to the promise of his early, and the radiance of his meridian greatness. But that his unequalled forensic talents, his unfaltering, adamantine integrity amid all the lures and temptations under which the ambition of meaner minds has sunk for ever; his delightful playfulness in the social circle; his zeal for human happiness, and human

freedom,—that these should be forgotten in an age, that sets up such high pretensions to correct and impartial estimates of those who adorn it, is a mournful paradox.

The truth is, that the mere idolaters of fortune have too much sway over our opinions of the great and good. They are a numerous and a powerful faction, and they have had a sensible influence in the depreciation of Lord Erskine. The last days of this eminent man were clouded by penury and its cares, — a sufficient signal for the whole tribe of flatteries, that were wont to greet him from a thousand tongues, when his very name was pronounced, to glide by on the other side, and to leave him unsaluted. Then walked forth the whole brood of crawling and envious passions; long buried emulations, and the cherished recollections of his former masteries over the mean and the little; and many took ample vengeance upon one, who overshadowed them in his hour of might, and, from the glance of whose eye, they would formerly have shrunk with affright.

Those who recollect the King's-Bench bar in

the best days of Erskine—have they since witnessed an advocate similar, or even second to him? Is there one leader in Westminster-Hall, whom either good luck, or talent, or the attorneys have raised to that pre-eminence, that can show so many sound and unequivocal titles to it? The late Lord Kenyon was as strongly opposed to Erskine's politics as a man could be. The colour and complexion of their minds were wholly different. They came often into collision at the period to which I refer, which was about thirty years ago; and their sentiments upon the judicial questions, which so frequently arose in cases of libel and sedition (and it was a time of bitter intestine division), were as far asunder as the poles. It was the age, too, of petulant and intemperate Attorney-Generals, for no one considered himself fit for his situation if he did not file a due portion of *ex-officio* informations. But even in those bad-humoured times, that excellent and venerable lawyer spoke and deemed well of Erskine; and if any one could rightly take offence at his tone and manner, which were sometimes indignant even to vehemence, in those

causes of high concernment, into which Erskine was accustomed to infuse his whole soul—it was Lord Kenyon, for I have seen the tears start from his eyes, after some little bickering had arisen between them.

I had been on a short visit to Richmond, and was returning to town on foot, a conveyance not inconvenient to a poor barrister, briefless and speechless in the back rows of the Court. An old coach came rumbling along and overtook me. It was one of those vehicles that reminded me of a Duke or Marquis under the old *règime* of France, retaining, in indigence and want, the faded finery of his wardrobe. Its coronet was scarcely discernible, and its gildings were mouldy; yet it seemed tenacious of what little remained of its dignity, and unwilling to subside into a mere hackney-coach. I believe I might have looked rather wistfully at it, for it was a sultry day, when I perceived a head with a red night-cap suddenly pop out from the window, and heard myself addressed by name, with the offer of a cast to London.

It was Lord Kenyon, who was returning from

his house at Marsh-gate, and I gladly accepted the invitation. He made the little journey quite delightful to me, by an abundance of most characteristic anecdotes of the bar in his own time; of Jack Lee, Wallace, Bower, Mingay, Howarth,* the last of whom, he said, was drowned in the Thames on a Sunday water-excursion. The good old man was evidently affected by the regrets which his name awakened, and they seemed the more poignant, because his friend was called to his account in an act of profanation. "But it was the sin of a good man," he observed, "and Sunday was the only day which a lawyer in full business could spare for his recreations."

Insensibly the conversation turned on Mr. Erskine. I know not what perversity of feeling came across me, nor do I recollect precisely what I objected to that eminent man, but it was a repetition of some of the ill-tempered animadversions of Westminster-Hall, that were then current. "Young man," said the Chief Justice,

* He was a King's Counsel. At his death, Mingay obtained the temporary lead of the King's-Bench, but was soon afterwards thrust out from it by Erskine.

"what you have mentioned is most probably unfounded; but these things, were they true, are only spots in the sun. As for his egotism, which they are so fond of laying to his charge, they would talk of themselves as much as Mr. Erskine does of himself, if they had the same right to do so. Erskine's nonsense would set up half a dozen of such men as run him down."

In his turn, Erskine was grateful and affectionate to Lord Kenyon, although not a little disposed occasionally to circulate epigrams, and indulge in pleasantries upon the eccentricities of that honest magistrate, whose dress, a very old pair of black velvet breeches in particular, that had sat at the Rolls,* and at Nisi-Prius for twelve years, was always considered fair game.

* Lord Kenyon was made Master of the Rolls in 1785. The Rolliad (written by Tickell, Dr. Lawrence, and Sheridan) quotes, in a note, one of his metaphors. It was in a cause where one of the parties had tried every artifice to gain time. "This is the last hair in the tail of procrastination." His oratory was of a most eccentric kind; it abounded with incongruities quite as ridiculous as this, and sometimes with scraps of Latin ludicrously misapplied.

These little *jeux d'esprit* flew about the barrister's benches, and afforded us frequent amusement. One or two of them I happen to recollect. Mr. Justice Ashurst was remarkable for a long lanky visage, not unlike that which Cervantes sketched as Don Quixote's. Erskine scribbled this ludicrous couplet on a slip of paper :—

> "Judge Ashurst, with his *lanthorn* jaws,
> Throws *light* upon the English laws."

The other was a Latin distich upon Mr. Justice Grose.

> "Qualis sit Grotius judex, uno accipe versu;
> Exclamat, dubitat, stridet, balbutit et—errat."

It was at the King of Clubs that I heard Erskine detail the story of his early professional life. He was certainly fond of the first pronoun personal; but the story, as he told it, is an instructive exemplification of those golden opportunities, which occur but rarely in human affairs. Yet, though what is vulgarly termed luck, had its share in urging along his most rapid and prosperous career, never was chance so well seconded

by great talent, by chivalrous zeal, and proud integrity of heart and conduct.

As he related it, the beginning of his fortune was ridiculously accidental. "I had scarcely a shilling in my pocket when I got my first retainer. It was sent me by a Captain Baillie, of the navy, who held an office at the Board of Greenwich Hospital; and I was to show cause in the Michaelmas term against a rule that had been obtained against him in the preceding term, calling on him to show cause why a criminal information, for a libel reflecting on Lord Sandwich's conduct as Governor of that charity, should not be filed against him. I had met, during the long vacation, this Captain Baillie at a friend's table; and, after dinner, I expressed myself with some warmth, probably with some eloquence, on the corruption of Lord Sandwich as First Lord of the Admiralty, and then adverted to the scandalous practices imputed to him with regard to Greenwich Hospital. Baillie knudged the person who sat next to him, and asked who I was? Being told that I had been just called to the bar, and had been formerly in the navy, Baillie ex-

claimed, 'Then, by G—! I 'll have him for one of my counsel.'

"I trudged down to Westminster-Hall," when I got the brief; and, being the junior of five who would be heard before me, never dreamed that the Court would hear me at all. The argument came on. Dunning, Bearcroft, Wallace, Bower, Hargrave, were all heard at considerable length, and I was to follow. Hargrave was long-winded, and tired the Court. It was a bad omen. But as my good fortune would have it, he was afflicted with the stranguary, and was obliged to retire once or twice in the course of his argument.

"This protracted the cause so long, that when he had finished, Lord Mansfield said that the remaining counsel should be heard the next morning. This was exactly what I wished. I had the whole night to arrange in my chambers what I had to say the next morning; and I took the Court with their faculties awake and freshened, succeeded quite to my own satisfaction, (sometimes the surest proof that you have satisfied others), and, as I marched along the Hall, after the rising of the judges, the attorneys flocked

round me with their retainers. I have since flourished; but I have always blessed God for the providential stranguary of poor Hargrave!"

Erskine related this anecdote with those raptures of retrospection, which are among the richest luxuries of minds that have triumphed over fortune. His pleading for Captain Baillie will be long remembered as a splendid monument of his eloquence, which never arose to loftier heights than in the exposure of oppression and injustice, and in dragging forth public corruption to shame and infamy. It was a strong struggle against the Court, and against Lord Mansfield in particular, who once or twice exhorted him to moderate his language, but interposed with his usual mildness and urbanity. He went on, without abating one jot of his vehemence; and though a young man, who had never heard the sound of his own voice before in a court of law, he astonished the whole bar and the auditory by his intrepidity and firmness. The rule was dismissed.

In the disturbed times of Pitt's administration, when the French revolution had peopled men's imaginations with so many appalling chimeras of

change and insurrection, and the terrors of criminal prosecutions spread a general panic amongst those who had distinguished themselves by their imprudent zeal for its doctrines, Erskine was always their undismayed advocate.

He told us a remarkable anecdote of Lord Loughborough in that season of political agitation. It was about the period of Paine's prosecution for his Rights of Man. Paine's retainer was sent to Erskine, who accepted it. He was then; as it is well known, high in the confidence of the Prince of Wales, and officiated as Attorney-General to that illustrious person. Certain persons, who had an undue but secret influence over the councils of Carlton-House, had impressed upon his excellent understanding, that Erskine would not, though acting under the strong obligation of a retainer, reconcile a defence of Paine to his duty as a law-officer to his Royal Highness.

"Shortly afterwards," said Erskine, "I happened to be walking home across Hampstead-Heath. It was a dark November evening. I met Loughborough coming in an opposite direction, apparently with the intention of meeting me

He was also on foot. 'Erskine,' said he, 'I was seeking you; for I have something important to communicate to you.'—There was an unusual solemnity in his manner, and a deep hollowness in his voice. We were alone. The place was solitary. The dusk was gathering around us, and not a voice, nor a footstep was within hearing. I felt as Hubert felt, when John half opened, half suppressed the purpose of his soul in that awful conference, which Shakspeare has so finely imagined. — After a portentous pause, he began. 'Erskine, you must not take Paine's brief.' 'But I have been retained, and I will take it by G—,' was my reply. The next day I was dismissed from the Prince's council."

Adequately to estimate what Lord Erskine was, as a Nisi-Prius advocate, we must forget all that the English bar has produced after him. They will afford no criterion by which he can be appreciated. They are all of inferior clay:—the mere sweepings of the hall in comparison. Nor is it easy to form any tolerable idea of him, but by having seen him from day to day, from year to year, in the prime and manhood of his intellect,

running with graceful facility through the chaos of briefs before him; and it is only by that personal experience, that it is possible to form any notion of the admirable versatility with which he glided from one cause to another, the irony, the humour, the good-nature, with which he laughed down the adverse case, and the vehemence and spirit with which he sustained his own.

Of the greater part of his Nisi-Prius conflicts, scarcely a memorial now exists. I shall not soon forget many of his puns, for to that equivocal species of wit, he was by no means indisposed either in the Court or at table. I particularly remember his opening a case, in which the plaintiff had brought his action against Christie, the celebrated auctioneer, to recover the deposit-money for an estate, which he had credulously purchased on Christie's representation of its beauties. In one of those florid descriptions, which abounded in all Christie's advertisements, the house was stated as commanding an extensive and beautiful lawn, with a distant prospect of the Needles, and as having amongst its numerous conveniences, an excellent billiard-room.

"To show you, gentlemen," said Erskine, "how egregiously my client has been deceived by the defendant's rhetoric, I will tell you what this exquisite and enchanting place actually turned out to be, when my client, who had paid the deposit, on the faith of Mr. Christie's advertisement, went down, in the fond anticipations of his heart, to this earthly paradise. When he got there, nothing was found to correspond to what he had too unwarily expected. There was a house, to be sure, and that is all—for it was nodding to its fall, and the very 'rats instinctively had quit it.' It stood, it is true, in a commanding situation, for it commanded all the winds and rains of heaven. As for the lawn, he could find nothing that deserved the name—unless it was a small yard, in which, with some contrivance, a washerwoman might hang half a dozen shirts. There was, however, a dirty *lane* that ran close to it; and, perhaps, Mr. Christie may contend, that it was an error of the press, and therefore for *lawn*, I suppose we must read *lane*. 'But where is the billiard-room?' exclaimed the plaintiff, in the agony of disappointment. At last, he was

conducted to a room in the attic, the ceiling of which was so low, that a man could not stand upright in it, and therefore must perforce put himself into the posture of a billiard player. Seeing this, Mr. Christie, by the magic of his eloquence, converted the place into a *billiard-room.* But the fine view of the Needles, gentlemen, where was it? No such thing was to be seen, and my poor client might as well have looked for a needle in a bottle of hay."

Never did the bar of England sustain such a loss as when the Whigs removed Erskine to the seals. It was transplanting an oak into a sandy soil: its roots were infected; its majestic arms became circumscribed and stinted, and its fine foliage, from that hour, drooped and withered. Had he been transplanted to a bishoprick, it would not have been a more unnatural transition. A pastoral charge would have been easier to him than a decree in equity. Yet he laboured unintermittingly to familiarize himself to the practice of Chancery; and he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the bar, during the short sojourn he made there; for there is an ubiquity in great

minds, that will not permit it to be wholly out of place, wherever you fix it. He availed himself, too, of very able assistance; for his old friend Hargrave, whose stranguary had been the foundation of his fortunes, rendered him most effectual service in finding cases for him, and shaping his decrees.

It is, however, no mean praise to say of Lord Erskine, that in that splendid exaltation, which dizzies ordinary minds, and renders the hearts of men, who have been suddenly lifted up to high preferment, cold and insensible, and oblivious of old intercourses, he felt all the force and freshness of his early attachments. He was neither cold, nor reserved, nor distant to the humblest applications. I was induced, upon one occasion, to request his interposition, in a question likely to be agitated in the House of Lords, considering that his opinions would receive considerable authority from his high official character. I was then at a distance from England, where the murmur of British politics could not reach me, not calculating upon the probability, that the Whigs would, in the meantime, have knocked their heads against the Catholic subject, and that,

before my application could reach them, they would all have been out of office. A little soreness, I think, is perceptible in it; and it shows also how the mind, under the vexations of disappointed ambition, welcomes to herself the delusive anticipations of ease, and comfort, and tranquillity, in the enjoyments of rural retirement.

"DEAR ——

"I am afraid you will think me unkind in not writing to you in answer to your friendly letter; but, I do assure you, that I remember you with true regard, and take the strongest interest in your welfare. The truth is, that we had gone out of office before I received the papers respecting * * * * * * *, and I have no reason to believe that any thing upon the subject is in agitation. If ever the matter *is* taken up, my regard for your opinions, and wishes, as well as the justice of the case (as far as I am yet acquainted with it), would induce me to do what little may *now* be in my power upon the matter you refer to.

"I am now retired (most probably for life),

and am living what, *for me*, may be considered an idle, but I hope not an useless, life, as I keep up my reading, in case the chances of this changeful world should give me the opportunity of turning it to public account.

"Should I, however, remain long out of a public station, I shall find healthful and interesting occupation in the cultivation of the grateful earth, who, if well cultivated, is less capricious in the distribution of her favours than courts or princes.

"I frequently see our friend * * * * *, who never fails to express great regard for you; and if it shall happen that I can practically manifest my own, I shall be well pleased, I do assure you, to convince you, that I am

Your very faithful,

And sincere servant,

London. ERSKINE."

I have dwelt thus largely upon the character of my departed friend, because his history is that of the English bar in its most flourishing period; nor should I ever have forgiven myself, had I

been capable of suffering my enthusiasm for such a character (an enthusiasm, not the fruit of a hasty or transient admiration) to grow dim and languid with the waning brightness of his later years.

But there were hearts that feasted upon his errors; that told them with delight, and transmitted them, too, with the venomous exaggerations, that evil stories gather, as they run their round among uncharitable narrators: for he had then nothing left to attract their stupid gaze—nothing to bribe their idiotic applause. He had no table to feed the coxcombs that "moed and chattered at him"—no glare of equipage to extort the vulgar deference paid to rank; his witticisms were pointless; even his intellect was said to decline with his finances.

And this has happened to him, whose noble efforts placed triple ramparts, and erected adamantine defences, around the trial by jury; the precursor in that great cause, of Mr. Fox himself, whose memorable bill is only the legislative record of the victory achieved by Erskine. To a man, whose forensic eloquence the puny pleaders of the

present day, the lean shrivelled insects, that now hop about the Hall, may indeed strive to imitate, but are doomed never, never to reach.

Where is the monument which we were told was to be erected by the English bar to his memory? Whose was the base envy, the low-minded avarice of his own personal fame, that extinguished the project? He is well known—the pertest, primmest pleader of the modern bar—the greatest among them in this day of its littleness. Honours may be showered upon him; but

"Ad populum phaleras, ego te intus, et in cute novi."

How immeasurably below the masculine vigour of Erskine's eloquence is the sophistical, wire-drawn rhetoric of this fortunate prater! Probably, in mere scholarship, S—— is somewhat superior; for Erskine was no clerk in that department of literature. His education, though completed at Cambridge, was desultory and broken, and, for many years, suspended by the duties of a naval, and afterwards of a military life; and he entered

the University, merely to save a certain number of terms at Lincoln's Inn. But turn to his masterly speech for Stockdale:—What book-worm could have spun so varied and beauteous a tissue of moral and political reflection, of lofty and sublime imagery? His rays were native and unborrowed, but of the sun of his own imagination.

Curran, the boast of the Irish bar, came three or four successive Saturdays to the King of Clubs. It was during a very short visit to London. On one occasion, Erskine and Curran met there. I augured, perhaps too sanguinely, from the accident that brought together two men, considered as prodigies in their respective countries, and the conflict of two minds of equal, but very different powers; and I expected to see, with a delight partaking of awe, the confluence of those mighty streams of pleasantry and talent.

I was disappointed. Curran was evidently not amongst congenial wits. At first, he was obstinately mute. Towards the close of the evening, however, he told us some amusing anecdotes of the Four Courts. At first, his utterance was slow and drawling; but I remarked, with asto-

nishment, how the most apish of human countenances, whose teeth and lips chattered, so as to make out a complete case for Lord Monboddo's hypothesis, how that countenance was lighted up, while its sunk and diminutive eyes, whose quick, wandering glances, indicated, to a superficial observation, an unfixed and unconcentrated intellect, gleamed, all at once, in flashes vivid as lightning, when he indignantly reverted to the wrongs of Ireland, whom he compared to Niobe, palsied with sorrow and despair over her freedom and her prosperity, struck dead before her. Then I began to perceive (not without shame for the temerity of my judgment) how imperfect an index his countenance exhibited of his intellectual character; and I could easily imagine how such a being might have been the orator, whose resistless and overwhelming powers of eloquence and reason were wielded, not indeed successfully, yet triumphantly, in behalf of Hamilton Rowan, and fulmined upon the hoary-headed and titled adulterer,* whose unextinguishable lust he so

* In the well-known crim. con. case of the Rev. Mr. Massey against the Marquis of Headfort.

finely compared to a volcano, blazing among the snows of Etna.

Several barren witticisms, attributed to Curran, having, about this time, found their way into newspapers, and even into jest-books, he most vehemently disclaimed the greater part of them. To some (it was his phrase) he pleaded guilty; and repeated a few of them, pointing out, with great accuracy, the names of persons, as well as the occasions, that called them forth. He also gave us some entertaining sketches of Lord Avonmore, Chief Justice of Ireland (Yelverton), the earliest friend of his youth, and companion of his studies.

Lord Avonmore was subject to perpetual fits of absence, and was frequently insensible to the conversation that was going on. He was once wrapped in one of his wonted reveries; and, not hearing one syllable of what was passing, (it was at a large professional dinner given by Mr. Bushe), Curran, who was sitting next to his Lordship, having been called on for a toast, gave "All our absent friends," patting, at the same time, Lord Avonmore on the shoulder, and tell-

ing him that they had just drank his health. Quite unconscious of any thing that had been said for the last hour, and taking the intimation as a serious one, Avonmore rose, and apologizing for his inattention, returned thanks to the company for the honour they had done him by drinking his health.

There was a curious character, a Sergeant Kelly, at the Irish bar. He was, in his day, a man of celebrity. Curran gave us some odd sketches of him. The most whimsical peculiarity, however, of this gentleman, and which, as Curran described it, excited a general grin, was an inveterate habit of drawing conclusions directly at variance with his premises. He had acquired the name of Counsellor Therefore. Curran said that he was a perfect human personification of a *non sequitur*. For instance, meeting Curran one Sunday near St. Patrick's, he said to him, "The Archbishop gave us an excellent discourse this morning. It was well written and well delivered; *therefore*, I shall make a point of being at the Four Courts tomorrow at ten." At another time, observing to

a person whom he met in the street, "What a delightful morning this is for walking!" he finished his remark on the weather, by saying, "therefore, I will go home as soon as I can, and stir out no more the whole day."

His speeches in Court were interminable, and his *therefores* kept him going on, though every one thought that he had done. The whole Court was in a titter when the Sergeant came out with them, whilst he himself was quite unconscious of the cause of it.

"This is so clear a point, gentlemen," he would tell the jury, "that I am convinced you felt it to be so the very moment I stated it. I should pay your understandings but a poor compliment to dwell on it for a minute; *therefore*, I shall now proceed to explain it to you as minutely as possible." Into such absurdities did his favourite "therefore" betray him.

Curran seemed to have no very profound respect for the character and talents of Lord N——, and omitted no opportunity of expressing what he thought of him. He deemed him a man, whose good qualities, and they, he said,

were but few, lay only skin-deep; a most fulsome flatterer, and his hospitality, to which he made high pretensions, was soured and rendered distasteful by his avarice. He dealt in general invitations, and rarely specified the day. Curran went down to Carlow on a special retainer. It was in a case of ejectment. A new Court-House had been recently erected, and it was found extremely inconvenient, from the echo, which reverberated the mingled voices of judge, counsel, criers, to such a degree, as to produce constant confusion, and great interruption of business. Lord N—— had been, if possible, more noisy that morning than ever. Whilst he was arguing a point with the counsel, and talking very loudly, an ass brayed vehemently from the street adjoining the Court-House, to the instant interruption of the Chief Justice. "What noise is that?" exclaimed his Lordship. "Oh, my Lord," returned Curran, "it is merely the *echo* of the Court!" The Judge felt the force of the repartee, and was evidently disconcerted for the rest of the day.

This is nearly all that I can recollect of Curran at the King of Clubs. At a much later period, it was my good fortune to renew my acquaintance with him, at a dinner given to a select party by Alderman Wood, during the mayoralty of that gentleman. Curran had, in the meanwhile, been transplanted to the Rolls, as forced and unnatural a process as that of removing Erskine to the Court of Chancery; for Curran had not, in his judicial situation, one quality befitting it. In truth he was complexionally, and habitually, an extra-judicial character. As a lawyer, he was almost unread. He never perused his briefs, but employed Burton to note down the leading facts on which the case turned, and if it was a law argument to hunt the books for precedents. This vicarious employment gradually brought Burton himself into considerable business. But Curran, as a general advocate, and more especially when he had to deal in high constitutional and popular topics, was alone and unrivalled. On the other hand, his unfitness for the Rolls was felt by the whole bar; nor was he uncon-

scious of it himself. In a year or two he became so uneasy in his situation, that he applied for his pension and retired.

At the renewal of our acquaintance, Curran was living at Brompton, and not in very splendid lodgings. He gave, however, several pleasant dinner parties; but his health was declining, and his spirits apparently broken. Yet, in spite of corporeal decay, his wonted fires burst out frequently in conversation, particularly as he recounted the incidents of his early life, or sketched the characters of his legal contemporaries. Then it was that he seemed renovated to youth—to enjoy the *bis vivere*, the *vitâ potiore* of Martial.

I remember well how offended he was, when some one at his table observed that Charles P——, who had just published a volume of his own speeches, belonged to Curran's school of oratory, and that many critics traced a strong resemblance of style and manner to the greatest of his own speeches. "Don't mention the fellow's name," exclaimed Curran. "If his speeches are like my own, it is but the resem-

blance of the ape to the man, which only aggravates the animal's deformity."

Shiel, the Roman Catholic demagogue, was there. He had written a tragedy expressly for Miss O'Niel, and the conversation turning on the piece, which was then in preparation at Covent-Garden, "Shiel," said Curran, "you know how I regard you. But I cannot better show that regard than by praying to Heaven that your tragedy may be damned. Your lawful wife is the law—stick to her—and don't insult her by your licentious gallantries with the drama."

Curran said that he never went a hunting but once; and that was at a friend's house about twenty miles from Dublin. They had perched him, he said, upon a self-willed animal, that would not listen to any reason, but was fretting and pulling, and making every effort to get into a full gallop, when they were throwing off the hounds. "I wanted to get off," continued Curran, "but the cunning brute would not let me dismount, preferring to keep me on his back for the mere luxury of tormenting me." "You were alarmed then, Curran," some one ob-

served. "Yes, yes, but not at my horse. My great fear was that the dogs would find. By good luck it was a bad day for hunting, and they did not find. It was upon that occasion that I made an execrable joke. The hounds had broke through a hedge that bounded a potatoe ground belonging to a rich, substantial agent. Seeing me (for I had given him, a few days before, a long bout of cross-examination in the Court of King's Bench), the fellow came up to me, and said, 'Oh, sure you are Counsellor Curran, the great lawyer. Now then, Mr. Lawyer, can you tell me by what law you are trespassing on my ground?' 'By what law, Mr. Malony,' I replied; 'why by the *lex tally-oh-nis* to be sure.' The pun succeeded, the whole party laughed, and the man went grumbling off."

SUPPLEMENTARY ANECDOTES.

JOHN HORNE TOOKE.

JOHN HORNE TOOKE was, perhaps, the most extraordinary man of the period in which he lived. Scarcely any political occurrence happened in which he did not take an active part. During his long life of seventy-seven years, he witnessed more revolutions of politics and of parties than any other man; and in all of them his talents and indefatigable spirit were exerted either on one side or the other.

In noticing some of the traits of this remarkable man's character, it will be necessary to touch *briefly* upon the principal events of his

life. His father, whose name was Horne, was a poulterer in Westminster, and was, to say the least, in very comfortable circumstances, if not rich. Anxious to bestow the best education upon his son, whom he intended for the church, he sent him first to Westminster School, and then to St. John's College, Cambridge; at both which seminaries he distinguished himself by talent and assiduity. On entering into holy orders, he was, under the patronage of the Duke of Newcastle, immediately inducted into the lucrative living of Brentford, where he continued for twenty-four years; during which time, however, he never quitted the field of politics.

During the commotions raised by Wilkes, the Reverend Mr. Horne espoused the popular side; and when the "favourite of the people" was disappointed in being returned to serve in Parliament, in 1768, he exerted the whole of his power and influence in procuring his election for Middlesex; which Herculean task he at length achieved by canvassing town and country; by soliciting votes and subscriptions; and by opening houses of entertainment for the voters.

Wilkes and he, however, soon afterwards quarrelled; for Mr. Horne did not find, when his turn was served, that Mr. Wilkes was the red-hot patriot that he had pretended. A paper war ensued, in which the celebrated Junius took a part. It was during this dispute, that the Rector of Brentford and the City Chamberlain meeting one day, upbraided each other for the several parts they took. At length, Horne told Wilkes that "he was a renegado from the cause of liberty; and that he ought to blush for his lukewarmness."—"You are mistaken, my dear parson," replied Wilkes, "I never was a Wilkite!"

Mr. Horne was a powerful advocate for American independence; but, in his zeal for liberty, he was so imprudent as to open and advertise a subscription "*for the relief of our unfortunate brethren in America, who were basely murdered by the British troops at Lexington.*"—For this he was prosecuted and imprisoned in the King's-Bench.

All hope of ecclesiastical preferment being at an end, or rather having imbibed the free-opi-

nions of the period, Mr. Horne, soon after his release from prison, threw off his canonicals, resigned the living of Brentford, and entered the Society of the Inner Temple; where he kept strict terms, and studied the law as a profession. In due time, the period arrived when he ought to have been called to the bar; but, when he put in his claim, the benchers refused to admit him on the ground that "the clerical character was *indelible;*" and that, "having been in holy orders, they would not countenance so indecent and impious a desertion of his former profession."—In this rejection, however, it was believed that political, or *party*, feeling had more weight than any desire to preserve the purity of religion.

Although he was now a layman in fact, and without a profession whereby to earn a livelihood, Mr. Horne's abilities were duly appreciated by the leaders of the political parties on each side; and he certainly was of great use to Mr. Fox, by whom he was held in great consideration; and with whom he remained for many years on terms of strict intimacy and friendship.

In 1790, he, Mr. Fox, and Lord Hood stood

as candidates for Westminster; but, from mismanagement, Mr. Tooke did not succeed in his wish to represent that city.

It is now time that the reader should be informed of the cause, and of all the circumstances connected with Mr. Horne's change of name.

An elderly gentleman, named *Tooke*, who had made a large fortune as a merchant in the African Company, bought some lands in Lincolnshire; but, the title being supposed to be defective, the crown set up a claim for them, and the Attorney-General was employed to conduct the case. Mr. Tooke had heard of the rejection of Mr. Horne by the benchers of the Inner Temple, and he conceived that this exclusion was no proof of his being an unsound lawyer. He accordingly applied to him; and Mr. Horne having *solicited* the suite, had the good fortune to defeat the crown lawyers.

Mr. Tooke was altogether so well pleased with his success, that he became strongly attached to his solicitor; and invited him to reside with him at his house in Westminster; which he did for

several years. Their friendship was, if possible, strengthened by John Horne assuming the surname of his patron, and attaching it to his own; so that from henceforward he was known as, and signed his name, "John Horne Tooke." During this intercourse, Mr. Horne Tooke, having no professional means of earning money, was obliged, on several occasions, to borrow from old Mr. Tooke; and the latter willingly accommodated him, at the rate of five hundred pounds at a time; but, in accordance with his mercantile habits, the old man always took care to have his bond, bearing interest, for whatever sum he advanced; although he had frequently told his *protégé* that he should be the sole heir to his immense property.

At length Horne Tooke discovered that his patron had a nephew, who had at some time offended him, and whom the old gentleman had refused to see for several years. This was a Colonel Harwood, to whom Horne contrived to be introduced, and whom he found to be a gentleman of refined manners and great intelligence.

Resolved to effect a reconciliation between the relatives, he said one day, "I understand, my dear sir, that you have a nephew."

"And how dare you, Sir, mention that circumstance to me," returned the old man, reddening with anger.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Tooke," replied Horne; "but I thought the intelligence of Colonel Harwood being in London might be agreeable to you."

"Quite the reverse, Sir," responded Mr. Tooke; "and if you regard my favour, you will never mention his name in my hearing."

"Upon my word, Sir," rejoined Horne, "I don't understand this. It is very possible that you may have cause—just cause of complaint; nay, sufficient to warrant you in discarding this newly found relative of yours; but, by G—d! I must and shall know the reason. For your friendship and kindness towards myself, I trust that I have not been—nay, I defy you to say that I have ever been—ungrateful; but, as I have enjoyed your confidence so long, I consider that

I have a right to know *why* you treat your own sister's son as a stranger."

"Mind your own business, *Master Horne*," returned the old man, highly chafed, but suppressing his rage, "or perhaps it may be worse for you; I can *alter my mind* you know.

"*This* is my business, *Master Tooke*," retorted Horne, "and I demand an explanation; if your nephew deserves your unkindness, so; I shall take upon me to judge between you."

"*Will* you?" interrupted the old man, with a sneer; "Upon my word, you are a meddling jackanapes; and, if you say another word, I 'll not leave you a shilling."

"I care little about that," replied the dutiful *protége;* "and now that we are upon *equal terms*, I will, with all due deference, tell you a little more of my mind; and that is, that if you will give me a good reason for your unnatural behaviour to Colonel Harwood, I shall remain with you on the same terms as hitherto; but if you will not do that, or if, being unable to do so, you persist in rejecting the friendly advances of your affectionate nephew, I shall have done with

you for ever; and I shall neither eat nor sleep in your house after this night; so, for the present, I will leave you to your reflections."

"Stop! stop!" exclaimed the old man, softening; "upon my word, Master Horne Tooke, you give yourself airs that neither become you, nor suit me. However, saucy varlet, as you are, you have justice on your side, and I suppose I must submit to your dictation as usual, and be d—d to you."

"Oh! don't let it be said, Sir," exclaimed Horne, "that my dictation"——

"Hold your tongue, Sir," interrupted the querulous old man: "sit down, and you shall hear what a disobedient villain that Harwood is.—In the first place—but, pray Sir, may I beg to be informed, as to what interest, or motive, you can have in thus diving into family affairs?"

"No interest, Sir, whatever," replied Horne; "and the only motive that I have, is a love of justice; for I could not bear that your nephew should be estranged from you, whilst I ate your bread, and drank of your cup. Besides, what must the world think of you; and indeed of me,

too, did I countenance this banishment of your near relative?"

The old man was satisfied with this explanation, and recounted to Mr. Tooke several petty circumstances of supposed offence on the part of Colonel Harwood; but his auditor soon explained, or rather *argued*, away all differences; and he had the satisfaction of carrying an invitation to the Colonel, to dine with his uncle the next day.

The old gentleman was so pleased with his nephew, that he gave him a general invitation to his house; and, at length, he became so attached, that he would have him become an inmate. This arrangement was soon acceded to; and John Horne Tooke took advantage of it, for the more convenient pursuance of his studies in philology; for which purpose he took the house in Purley Bottom, where he composed the principal portion of his famous work, entitled "Diversions."

But, as it was impossible for old Mr. Tooke to be totally deprived of his company, John Horne arranged his plans so as to live in the house in Westminster one month, and in his own the

next, and so on. Colonel Harwood, too, by this plan, secured six months of liberty during the year; for, whilst Horne Tooke was with his uncle, he pursued his own affairs elsewhere.

As a reward for their assiduity in contributing to his amusement and comfort, Mr. Tooke invariably told them, when they met together, that they should be his joint and sole heirs; but, unfortunately, if either of them vexed him, or became cavillers, during his month of servitude, he would invariably tell him that "he would disinherit him, and leave all his property to the other!"

He had threatened each in this manner so often, that at length, upon comparing notes, it became a moot point whether Tooke, or Harwood, or both, should inherit the riches of this testy old man. Accordingly, they laid their heads together, and agreed, that whichever should be declared heir by *will*, should divide equally with his friend. This ingenious mode of defeating the threats of the old gentleman, caused many a laugh between them.

But, alas! human foresight is often but of little

avail, after all! The old merchant "died one day," and left neither Mr. Horne Tooke, nor his nephew, half-a-crown! He bequeathed the whole of his immense property to the son of another sister, in the city of Norwich, a person whom, it is doubtful, whether he ever saw.

Here was a disappointment, which, however, Horne Tooke submitted to with great philosophy. The name of the lucky heir was Beazely, son of an alderman of that name.* He and his father, of course, came to London to take possession, when a meeting of the relatives took place in the old gentleman's late residence. After dinner, young Beazely got up, and, to the surprise of

* This Beazely was the alderman alluded to in a late Number of the New Monthly Magazine, in the article PARRIANA, where Dr. Parr gives an account of the master whom he succeeded in Norwich School. This pedagogue wrote a Dictionary of the English Language, and some of his definitions were comical enough. It seems that he published his book by subscription, and Beazely having refused to expend half-a-guinea on the work, the learned lexicographer popped down his name out of revenge. The word *beastly* stood thus:—"BEASTLY,—a corruption of BEAZELY:—any thing *fat, gross,* or *nasty.*"

veery one, said, that it was too bad for "Cousin Harwood to be cut out, and he was determined that he should have half." The father embraced his son, saying, "There's my own boy!—you ha' just done the very thing that I was a thinking o', and ye won't thrive worse for doing a good action."

Colonel Harwood, accordingly, received seventy-two thousand pounds in cash, and called upon Horne Tooke with the news. The latter, who had several visitors with him, congratulated him upon his good fortune; and, after further compliments, his visitor said, "You know, Mr. Tooke, you have no *positive right* to any of this money, as it was obtained upon a different tack to what our joint expectations were; but"——

"By no means," returned Tooke, "I have no right to it whatever; it was the free-will gift of your cousin; and I wish you health and long life to enjoy it. Therefore, don't say another word upon the subject."

"O, but I shall," exclaimed Harwood, "and I shall insist that you have some of the money; it is only your due, for the friendly manner in which

you reconciled me with my uncle; and, although he has *done* us both, that is no reason why I should neglect you. Therefore, tell me candidly, now, how much will be sufficient to make you comfortable?"

"You are very kind, Harwood," said Tooke, "at a word then, if I had four hundred a year for myself and the girls (his natural daughters), I should be quite happy, and be enabled to leave them independent when I am gone."

"You shall have it, Tooke," said the Colonel, writing,—"there is a check upon Coutts for eight thousand pounds."

Tooke, of course, returned many thanks, and the friends parted mutually pleased with each other:—but, behold! when the check was presented next morning, the bearer was told that its payment had been stopped at the bank two hours before. It seems that Colonel Harwood had been wrought upon by some of his relations, or that he, himself, had repented his generosity in the course of one short night.

This treatment was worse than childish; it was

intolerable; and, as there were several witnesses to the gift, Mr. Tooke was advised to throw the matter into a Court of Equity. This was done; and, as is the custom in all Chancery matters, the suite was so long deciding, that the plaintiff, infirm as he was, at length ordered himself to be carried into Court, *on his bed*, where he spoke his mind so freely to the Chancellor, that a decision was given in a few days, in his favour, of course. Among other severe things, Mr. Tooke said to Lord Eldon, that "it appeared he (his Lordship) determined to withhold the bread from his lips until he had no teeth to chew it."

Of the part taken by Mr. Tooke in advocating the principles of the French revolution, and a Reform in the British Parliament, and of his trial for *treason*, it is unnecessary here to speak; such matters pertaining to the province of history. It is sufficient to notice, that he and his companions were acquitted, to the great satisfaction of the public, and the honour of a British jury; but, to the consternation of the people in power,

who were convinced thereby, that they could not carry things with so high a hand as they had imagined and designed.*

* Certain very remarkable and mysterious circumstances, attending Horne Tooke's arrest and trial, were divulged soon after his death; for obvious reasons they were kept in profound secrecy during the lives of the principal actors. The publisher of the Report of the Trial, in allusion to Lord Erskine's speech, said, that "it required no other introduction, or preface, than an attentive perusal of the case of Thomas Hardy, *the charge being the same, and the evidence not materially different.*" In fact, it was difficult to imagine *upon what ground the Attorney-General could have expected to obtain a verdict against Tooke, after Mr. Hardy's acquittal;* more particularly, as several of the jury upon Hardy's trial, had also been sworn as jurors upon Tooke's. Be that as it may, the following narrative developes this mystery, and explains the object and resources of Pitt and his colleagues:—

"At the period when the sensations excited in England, by the burst of liberty in France, were in full exercise, Horne Tooke gave a weekly entertainment, at which the leaders of the party he espoused were generally present; and political discussions were carried on with a freedom which soon attracted the notice of the government.

"On one of these occasions, a northern Member of Parliament was introduced by a friend, who represented him to be "*a man of independent principles, and firmly*

In 1801, it is well known, that Lord Camelford procured the return of Mr. Tooke as Member for Old Sarum. He kept his seat from

attached to the cause of Reform." At a subsequent meeting, this person proposed, that Mr. Tooke should compose a speech for him, on a popular subject, which was shortly to be debated in the house. This was accordingly done, and it was delivered; but it drew forth not a single observation from any of the opposite party; and the question was lost without any notice of the arguments it contained.

"Another was then proposed, which Mr. Tooke recommended to be accompanied by a motion *for increasing the pay of the navy.* One of the party remarked, that such a motion would create a *mutiny.* '*That,*' said Mr. Tooke, '*is the very thing we want.*'

"What followed, it is unnecessary to add; for their plans were frustrated by the arrest of Mr. Tooke and his friends the next day, on a charge of high treason!

"At an early period of his imprisonment, while he was one day occupied in conjectures on the immediate cause of his arrest, and the nature of the evidence by which the charge against him was to be supported, one of the attendants informed him that a person wished to speak to him. Mr. Tooke desired that he might be admitted; and a gentleman was introduced, whose person was partially concealed in a large cloak.

"After a short general conversation, and the attendant having withdrawn, the stranger asked the prisoner

February until May, when he was compelled to vacate by the votes of the House; which declared him incompetent to sit, on the same

whether he was aware of the circumstances which led to his arrest, and of the person who gave the information? Being answered in the negative, 'Then, Sir,' said the stranger, 'I now apprise you, that the *proposal and remark made by you, on the subject of increasing the pay of the navy,* form the ground of the charge; and the only witness, on whose evidence they expect to convict you, is *that very person who was to deliver the speech.* I am a member of His Majesty's Privy Council; amongst whom it is in debate—*whether that person shall be produced as a witness on the part of the Crown, or whether they shall suffer you to call him up for the defence, and so convict you out of the mouth of your own witness.* When that shall have been decided, you will see me again.'

"After this nobleman's departure, Mr. Tooke sent for two of his confidential friends, and, after communicating to them the circumstances, addressed one of them (a Norfolk gentleman) to the following effect:—'You must go to this scoundrel, and tell him, I intend to subpœna him as a witness; and you must represent to him, that unless he interests himself powerfully in my behalf, I shall be lost; *that my whole dependance is on him,* as the strength of my defence will rest upon the evidence he may adduce. Add every argument you can invent to convince him that I consider my life entirely at his mercy, and that I look upon him as my best friend:

grounds as those put forward by the benchers of the Inner Temple, when they refused to call him to the bar.

in short, that all is lost without his friendship and support.'

"The result was, that *the strongest assurances of friendship were given;* and, the next morning, the Privy-Counsellor again visited Mr. Tooke, and informed him that the council had finally determined that he should be allowed to call him for the *defence*, when the Attorney-General *should elicit the necessary evidence by cross-examination.* At this interview, Mr. Tooke, on the part of himself and his friends, entered into a solemn obligation never to divulge the affair, until after the death of the nobleman, who had thus hazarded his own life to save that of his friend.

"During the interval previous to the trial, frequent communications took place between Mr. Tooke's friends and the northern member, by which he, as well as his employers, were completely cajoled; and, when the trial took place, they were so sure of their victim, as to have had *hundreds of warrants ready*, to be issued for the apprehension of the friends of Reform, in all parts of the country.

"But what was their astonishment and mortification, when they found, after the case on the part of the Crown had been gone through, and closed, *that the witness in question was not called up at all*, though in attendance, and eager to finish his infamous part in this intended tragedy! Mr. Tooke left his case as it stood;

Horne Tooke led a retired life at Wimbledon, except on Sundays, which were his public days. On these he saw company, and provided very handsome entertainment for all who had the honour of being introduced to him. These dinners were frequented by many of the political, literary, and professional men of the period; all of whom contributed to the intellectual portion of the feast. His immediate friends, Sir Francis Burdett, Colonel Boswell, &c. in as delicate a manner as possible, took care that the expenses attendant on the more solid parts of the treat afforded at these agreeable meetings, should fall lightly on the purse of their host; for, although

and, upon the summing up, the honesty and good sense of the jury prevailed over the malevolence of the enemies to freedom.

"The Attorney-General and his employers were thunderstruck; and, after the verdict of acquittal was pronounced, the learned judge remarked to a person who stood near him, 'That the evidence for the Crown was certainly insufficient to convict the prisoner, after the fate of the indictment of Hardy; but, what motives Mr. Tooke had for not calling *certain witnesses* in his defence, after having subpœnaed them, were best known to himself.'"

Mr. Tooke possessed a comfortable competence for his own family, he had not a sufficient income to defray the heavy charges attendant on the entertainment of so many guests. His friends took upon themselves to supply his hospitable table by innumerable presents of wine, fish, venison, and game of all kinds.

For Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Tooke felt a strong attachment; and the Baronet was not backward in evincing for him, in return, the most cordial and ardent friendship. In his last moments, it afforded him great satisfaction to observe Sir Francis, and others most dear to him, surrounding his bed. Having fallen into a lethargy, and being supposed to be entirely insensible, his friend mixed up a cordial for him, which Mr. Clive and Dr. Pearson advised him not to administer, as it would be to no purpose; but the Baronet persevering, and raising Mr. Tooke, the latter opened his eyes, and seeing who offered the draught, took the glass and eagerly drank off the contents.

Horne Tooke was cheerful and facetious to

the last: when informed that he had but a short time to live, he observed, that "he should not be like the man who, being condemned to die at Strasburg, requested time to pray, until the patience of the magistrates was exhausted; and who, afterwards, as a last expedient, begged their permission to close life by a game at his favourite amusement of *nine pins;* but who kept bowling on, resolved not to finish the game until the hour for execution was past."

He particularly desired to be buried in his garden at Wimbledon; that no funeral ceremony should take place on the occasion; but that he should be borne to the grave by six of the poorest men in the parish; each of whom was to receive one guinea.' These wishes, however, were not complied with, his friends judging it to be more proper that his body should be deposited in the family vault at Ealing.

It is surprising that a man of Tooke's liberal and expanded mind should have made so unequal a distribution of his property among his children. For some reason, known only to himself, he appointed his daughter, Mary Heart, his sole exe-

cutrix, and bequeathed to her the whole of his estate and effects, except one or two hundred pounds to her sister!

Horne Tooke, though a man of liberal sentiments, was so far a despot in his family, that the inmates were afraid sometimes to speak, move, or do any thing which might offend him. On one occasion, Sir Francis Burdett's house being full, O'Connor slept at Tooke's. Next morning, coming into the breakfast-room, and having saluted the family, he sat down at a little round table with Mr. Tooke, where the latter was accustomed to breakfast alone.

His daughters, seeing this, appeared very uneasy, and made signs to the stranger to sit at the large table. "O, no;" said O'Connor, "I am very well here—I shall breakfast with my old friend."

"So you shall, rebel," said Mr. Tooke, bursting into a loud laugh, and enjoying the embarrassment of his daughters: — "Girls, bring O'Connor's cup to *my* table: by G—d! rebel,

you are the only person that has sat down to breakfast with me these eighteen years!"

DROLL SPECIMEN OF COURAGE.

Mr. Tooke was by no means a man of courage; although, from his bold writings, one might fancy him a hero; a champion ready to defend his opinions with sword or pistol, or even with his fist. One would think that the man who, in answer to an attack of Junius, could write such words as the following, must be a person of no ordinary nerve. They were these: —"The King, whose actions justify rebellion to his government, deserves death from the hand of every subject; and, should such a time arrive, *I should be as free to act as any.*" He made use of a similar remarkable expression in regard to the unfortunate King James, in reference to the desertion of his army. Still Mr. Tooke knew himself to be entirely destitute of real courage; and he confessed to an intimate friend that he

was a coward. "I should have made but a bad soldier," said he, one day, laughing, "for I have been all my life a complete coward: bravery is engendered by a long habit of fearlessness of danger, in a heart naturally bold; I never had much of this sort of stamina; and, during the restless life which I have led, the little portion of courage I possessed, oozed out at my finger ends, from the continual fret and worry in which I have been kept. I will tell you the boldest, the bravest, the most courageous thing I ever did in my whole life. I was at a meeting at Croydon, where, having stood forward to advocate a certain question, I was sharply attacked by a fellow of the name of Phillips; but, however, I gave him such a dressing in reply, that, even whilst I went on tearing him in pieces at every sentence, I was actually afraid that he would horsewhip me when I had done, or send me a challenge to fight him. A pretty thing, by the bye, it would be to see two parsons, with a pair of pistols under their arms, saluting each other, at the early hour of five, on a cold frosty

morning! O, yes, I gave the *Reverend* Mr. Phillips such a drubbing, that even I myself was surprised at it."

"Did his Reverence take no notice of it then?"

"Not a word, faith! By G—d! he was as great a coward as I was myself! But, let me tell you, Sir, the affair was no less *heroic* on my part; for I thought him as brave as a lion, and I dare say my words made him think the same of me. I assure you, Sir, it requires no small degree of pluck—when you have not the law at your back—to beard a stout bully-looking fellow to his very teeth; when, perhaps, the next morning he may send a bullet through your brains."

SHALL AND WILL.

An Irish gentleman speaking one day to Mr. Tooke on the propensity of many of his own countrymen, and *all* Scotchmen, to use the word *will* instead of *shall*, and vice-versa, inquired of him what rule ought to be followed to avoid falling into this kind of blunder?

"It is merely a matter of taste," answered the grammarian; but, if you wish to make yourself understood by an Englishman, the best rule you can adopt, that I know of, is, when you find yourself inclined to use the word *will*, say *shall*; and when *shall* comes to the tip of your tongue, stop it, and say *will*."

"But that is a rule of contrary," observed the gentleman. "I wish you would be so good as to give me a reason; for, as I am apt to make this sort of mistake, I should be glad to have something impressed on my mind which would be a kind of beacon to prevent me from committing myself."

"SHALL is a verb, and may be Englished by *must*. Take care then of the *idea*, and look at the power of the nominative.

"WILL is also a verb,—and is, simply, *to will* or *desire*.

"But there may be actions that are indifferent either to *compulsion* or *desire*. These are *simple futures*, and might be expressed by *may*, or *may happen*. We want a word for this *simple future*, and are compelled, in lieu of a bet-

ter, to make use of SHALL and WILL; which, of themselves, have a fixed meaning, and are neither of them applicable to a *simple future*. In this case, either is naturally *as good* as the other. The Scotch, and many of the Irish, have taken one side: the English the other. Both are *equally correct* in fact; or rather *equally wrong:* but both Scotch and Irishmen must write *English;* and here the *difficulty* lies.

"The Germans have a *third* verb for a simple future, viz.:—WERDEN, *to become:*—as ICH WERDE, *I am to become.* This is partially English, and accounts for the use of our word WERE, which has puzzled the grammarians in phrases such as '*Were I to do this*'—'*It were wise to do so,*' &c.

"WOULD and SHOULD are governed by, and fetter the rules for, SHALL and WILL."

Sir Francis Burdett one evening was speaking most affectionately of his grandfather; and, among other agreeable recollections of the days of his boyhood, he stated that his progenitor had been also in the habit of playing a game at whist

every night: "and it is curious," he added, "that one night, just as he had said 'Clubs were trumps!' and won the game, he fell back in his chair and expired!"

Curran, who had not yet said a good thing, instantly observed, "Baronet, you surely have made a mistake: he must have said '*Spades* were trumps;'" and pointed significantly towards the ground, as if in the act of digging.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN was, on one occasion, the subject of conversation at Brookes's, when several amusing anecdotes were related of his wit, eloquence, and ingenuity; a few of which are as follow:—

Mrs. Lefanu, sister to Mr. Sheridan, was very fond of dramatic entertainments; and at one time had a very neat private theatre fitted up at her own house. The play of *Douglas* being cast, the hostess herself, who was a remarkably *fat woman*, chose to enact the part of Lady Randolph; and hand-bills were accordingly distributed among the amateurs and their friends, announcing the performance.—On the morning of the day on which the entertainment was to take place, a gentleman met Mr. Curran, who had just returned from a

professional tour, and begged the favour of his company that night to Mrs. Lefanu's; at the same time telling him that the lady herself was going to perform; and bidding him guess what part she had chosen?—

"What part!" replied Curran, "One of the *Grampian hills*, I suppose.—I know no other part in the play that will suit her."

In the year 1790, the representation of the County of Down was strongly disputed between the eldest son of the then Lord Hilsborough, and the late Lord Castlereagh: and amongst the lawyers engaged for the occasion, was Mr. William Downes, afterwards Chief Justice of the King's-Bench. Previously to his setting out for Downpatrick, Mr. Downes happened to meet Curran, to whom he mentioned that he was retained for one of the parties; and added, that he was sorry to understand that much ill-will was expected to display itself—insomuch that it was not unlikely but that the partisans of the candidates would proceed to duelling and bloodshed. "For my part," continued he, "I shall keep clear of every subject but that connected with my professional duties."

"No doubt," said Curran, "you are perfectly well prepared."

"O yes," replied Downes, "I have made myself master of all the *election cases*."

"Very good," replied Curran; "yet, however desirous you may be of keeping yourself clear of controversy and quarrels, some irritable bully may run foul of you; therefore, I would recommend strongly that you should have *Wogden's case* at your *fingers ends*."

"Wogden's case!" observed Downes, with surprise, "I never heard of that case before—I am much obliged to you, my dear fellow, for mentioning it—where shall I find the report of it?"

"I am surprised," returned Curran, "that you, so conversant with elections, should never have heard the *report* of Wogden's case!—There are twenty shops in town where you can procure the case itself."

Mr. Downes, pleased with the hint, deferred his journey towards the theatre of war for that day; the whole of which he employed in ransacking every bookseller's shop in Dublin.—At length, he mentioned his difficulty to a brother barrister,

whom he met; and was not a little confounded when the latter, readily taking the joke, burst into a loud laugh at his simplicity, and told him "instead of continuing his researches among the booksellers, to step across the street to a *gun-smith's shop*, where he would find the case in a minute!"

It is well known that the gentlemen of the Irish bar have a species of wit peculiar to themselves,—dry and sarcastic—acquired, in a great measure, from their habit of examining witnesses at *Nisi-Prius;* on which occasions, they are not only obliged to exert all their talents, but actually to proceed like inquisitors; by indulging in the rankest abuse of the witnesses, &c. on the opposite side. This, indeed, has been so much the case, that one unaccustomed to such cases, might imagine the witness to be *on his trial* before a court competent to extort confessions.—The barrister, therefore, relies not so much on the justice of his cause, as on the dexterity of puzzling his opponent; and in this sort of *finesse*, either party is seldom restrained by the judge; who, when a barrister had, of course, pursued the same plan

himself. This very censurable practice makes the Irish barrister, in many instances, a most disagreeable companion; for, with all his knack of story-telling, he is so addicted to contradiction, and to the habit of putting crooked, inconvenient, and disagreeable questions, even upon the most unimportant subjects, that a stranger would suppose every assertion required little short of an oath to ensure belief, and prevent *cross-examination*.

Curran was, at one period, addicted to this species of ill-manners; but his exuberant wit at length obviated the necessity of resorting to such contemptible means of displaying his importance. At the bar, however, he retained the *professional habit*, and frequently played off the most severe jokes and sarcasms, where discretion and kind words would have done honour to his head and heart.—But no conqueror was ever yet heard of, who, on all occasions, carried off the palm of victory. Curran now and then met with a *rum* customer, whom, in attempting to *floor*, he himself was tripped up.

A young cornet, quartered in Dublin, being in

want of a charger, bought one from a horse-dealer of the name of Giles, who kept a celebrated horse-bazaar and livery-stables in the neighbourhood of the barracks. The animal was warranted perfectly sound, and *four year's old;* but, on being *paraded,* he was recognised as a campaigner of at least sixteen years standing!

The young gentleman went to his colonel, and related all the circumstances, requesting his advice; and the latter recommended him to return the horse immediately. The animal was accordingly taken by a dragoon to Giles, who refused to receive him; whereupon, the cornet begged farther advice from the colonel, who told him to have the horse again led to the livery-stables, and let go into the yard; then, to bring an action at law for the recovery of the amount.

This was done, and Mr. Curran was retained for the cornet.

When the trial came on, and the plaintiff's case gone through, Giles's hostler, well known in Dublin by the name of Blinker Micky, because blind of one eye, appeared in the witness's box, ready to swear through thick and thin for the

defendant. Micky, or Michael, was one of the most accomplished blackguards and wits of that witty city; and Curran, who was well acquainted with his celebrity, was delighted with the opportunity of making a pass or two at him with his own weapons.

"How goes it, Mick?" said Mr. Curran, the instant that the defendant's counsel had done with him.

Micky.—"Quite hearty, by the powers of Venus; and better for seeing your honour well."

Curran.—"Well, Mick, how many years—now I am not particular to eight or ten—have you known Black Drogheda?"

Micky.—"O, plase your honour, we won't talk of *years* any how; I knew him since he was bought at Knocknokery fair, and all the *months* since, your honour."

Curran.—"And in what year of our Lord was that same fair of Knocknokery?"

Micky.—"Last fair but one, your honour; and all the days before and since."

Curran.—"That is wide of the mark, my boy: how long has Mr. Giles had him?"

Micky.—" That same time, Sir."

Curran.—" Tell us how many months?"

Micky.—" About fifteen or sixteen, your honour."

Curran.—" Years."

Micky.—" O, by the holy! you'll not floor me that way neither: you have no need, counsellor, to help me up before I am down."

Curran.—" I ask your pardon, Micky; all the world knows you are an upright boy."

Micky.—" Thank your honour."

Curran.—" But come, Mick—my honest fellow—don't belie Black Drogheda, and think to chouse him out of his birth-right. Do you mean to say that he is not of age?"

Micky.—" He is, plase your honour, and well-behaved for his years."

Curran.—" Ah! you are a good lad, Mick.—You mean to say, then, that he has arrived at the years of discretion?"

Micky.—" There is not a genteeler, nor a discruter charger in the service, your honour."

Curran.—" How long has he served, Mick?"

Micky.—"O, by the holy *farmer*!* now, I know nothing at all at all about any service but Mr. Giles's; and he is the man who will give me a crakter any day I ax him."

* It is well known that the lower orders of the Irish are much addicted to swearing; they practice this bad habit, however, so much in *common parlance*, that they hardly reserve any oath sufficiently powerful, or expressive of anger or dislike, when they happen to fall into violent paroxysms of rage; in this particular, therefore, they differ from the people of all other nations; and resemble only the British seaman, who means *nothing*, at least no harm, when he swears the most horrid oaths. Paddy has the advantage of Jack in one point; his asseverations, and even curses, have something in them, either witty, or ludicrous, or, at least, antithetic to the subject he is enlarging on; whilst the sailor's worst anathemas, though eccentric, are generally *pointless*, and, consequently, "pass by, like the idle wind, which we regard not."

One word more on "Cursing and Swearing."—The Catholics of Ireland (no disparagement) are more addicted to this habit than the Protestants, particularly the Presbyterian and Methodistical portion of the community; but a few, even of the most puritanical of the latter, sometimes *indulge*, we suppose by way of *relief*; but, on such occasions, they contrive to evade the laugh of the scorner, by *mincing the matter*; thus, for "By the hokey!"—read *holy*. "By the holy farmer!"—read *father*, &c. &c.

Curran.—"Shall I call Mr. Giles to your character, Mick?"

Micky.—"By the ghost of my father!—ye're no such fool, counsellor; you are the man that knows a *kiroge* from a *carrot.*"

Curran.—"Well, but Mick, will you venture to swear that Black Drogheda has seen no more years than four?"

Micky.—"How could I, your honour?—Mightn't he have been *blind* before we bought him?"

(Here there was a loud laugh at Curran's expense.)

Curran.—"To the point, Micky!—will you swear he is no more than four years old?"

Micky.—"Who is he yer honour's talking of, plase yer reverence?"

(Another burst of laughter.)

In this manner did Curran and Micky keep it up for half an hour, *carte* and *tierce;* Micky giving Curran many a hit; himself untouched during the whole time. The barrister at length anxiously sought an opportunity of throwing him, and leaving him on the ground; demanding, how

he could possibly know the horse's exact age, so as to take upon himself to swear to it?

"By the table of war!" replied Micky, "I never heard such a question! I'm surprised at yer honour! How would I know? Did not I put my very finger on the mark in his tooth?"

Now Curran had never had a four-footed beast in his possession up to this time, and was altogether ignorant of horse-flesh. Eager, therefore, to give his opponent a fall, he hastily said, "Now, Micky, could you tell *my age*, by putting your finger on the mark in my tooth?"

Micky instantly replied—"O, by the hoky! counsellor, I'll have nothing to do with your tooth—for they say ye're a damned *bite!*"

Peals of laughter put an end to the hostler's examination.

The best thing related of Mr. Curran, on the above occasion, was the following judicious manœuvre, by which a sum of money was recovered from a scoundrel, in whose *safe*-keeping it had been placed by an unsuspecting countryman, who came to Dublin for the renewal of the lease of his farm. For this purpose, he had brought with

him bank notes for one hundred pounds, which were to be paid as a *fine*.

Having taken up his quarters at an inn, he requested the landlord to take care of his money for him, as he wished to go and look about the city, and to treat himself to the theatre that evening. Mine host readily undertook the precious charge; but when, next morning, the farmer had spruced himself up to attend the landlord's levee, what was his astonishment, on asking for his money, to hear the villainous landlord deny any knowledge of him, or his hundred pounds!

"By the holy!" said he, "you gave me no money; and, by the powers! no money shall you have back."

"Sure, and it's not in arnest ye are, masthur!" said the countryman, turning pale at the prospect of losing his treasure; then recovering himself, he continued, with a smile, expressive of fear and doubt, "Bad luck to your jokes at this present writing—make haste, man, and give me the notes, else I'll be late, and I won't have my lase signed at all."

"I know nothing of you or your lase," replied the landlord.

"Oh, murdher!" exclaimed the farmer, "does my eyesight desaive me, to hear the swindling tief going for to deny that I gave him the money, and that, too, unknownst to any one, for the entire safety?"

"It's yourself that's the swindler, to come for to ax me for money that I never seen," retorted mine host.—"But Dublin's not the plaice for ye to come and play yer thricks in; and ye'll find we're not to be caught so aisy: so take yourself off, ye robber, or, by the holy! I'll send for the police this blessed minute, and swear a highway-robbery against ye, and have ye put into Newgate, and hanged for that same."

The poor countryman, transfixed with astonishment and horror, was for some time unable to reply, but continued to regard his plunderer with a vacant stare, and open-mouth:—at length he found words, and exclaimed, "The holy Jasus keep me from all mortal sin! Ounly hear to the false tory robber. But I'll have justice of ye, ye murdering tief of the world, if there's law, or

justice, or judge, or jury, to be had in Dublin cety."

Having uttered this threat, he pressed his hat down violently over his forehead, and, clenching his hands in agony, rushed out into the street, the very picture of despair. After walking on for some time, the poor fellow bethought him of making his complaint to one of the judges at the Four Courts, the magnificent structure of which he had admired during his peregrination the day before, and where he had learned that the sages of the law sat daily, for the administration of justice.

Although his topographical knowledge of the city was very slender, he soon recognized the famous spot, and boldly entered the hall, where he soon mixed with the throng of attornies, clients, witnesses, and barristers, that paraded up and down; but, seeing no one who was likely to give him either advice or assistance, he was about entering one of the Courts, which was also greatly crowded, when an officer told him, in an authoritative tone, to stand back. The farmer expostulated, but in vain; for the man in office, learning that he had no business with the cause which was

pending, peremptorily refused to let him pass:—seeing an unusual eagerness and anxiety, however, in the countryman's countenance, he inquired the nature of his business; to which the latter replied, "I wish, Sur, to spake to the judge about a murdering robbery that ——"

"Pooh! pooh!" replied the officer, "you must not come here about murders and robberies,—why don't you go to a magistrate?"

The countryman responded, with a deep sigh, "Sure, it's myself that's a stranger in Dublin, and I don't know the ways of it.—Oh, what will I do this blessed day!—I won't get my lase signed at all; and I must not show my face at Callagher without it. I'll be turned out of house and home" (here the poor fellow shed tears); "and poor Norah, and the dear childer, will be obliged to take bag, and go out. The holy vargin, and the blessed saints, give them their protection!—But," clenching his hands, "it's no use bodhering about judges or magistrates:—I'll go back this instant, and tear the Orange tief's heart out of his body; it's no more nor he desarves; and, if

I'm hanged for the murder, sure it's better than to be robbed entirely."

The officer's curiosity was excited by the violence of the poor man's emotions; and he inquired who it was that had robbed him.

The farmer replied, "Him, sure, as keeps the carman's inn, down there, in the place they calls Stoneybatter."

Officer.—"But there are several carmen's inns:—what is his name?"

Farmer.—"His name, Sur, is Rooney:—I don't know his Christhun name;—but that's what's painted on the sign of the house."

Officer.—"What, Nick Rooney, that keeps the 'King William o' Horseback!'—By jakers! my good fellow, you are fallen into d—d bad hands.—Only come across Old Nick, and he'll play the divil with ye. Nick Rooney is the worst villain, and the biggest blackguard, in all Dublin city; and that's saying a great dale any how. What has he robbed you of?"

Farmer.—"One hundred pound;—bad luck to the villain!"

Officer.—"What!—a hundred pound!—how did Nick rob you of that same?"

Farmer.—"I gave him the notes last night to keep safe for me; an' when I axed him for them this morning, by the powers! if he didn't deny clane that ever I giv'd them to him—the false murderer that he is."

Officer.—"But had ye no witness to that same?"

Farmer.—"Is it a witness that ye mane, masthur?—Sure, the divil a witness in life was there but myself and Rooney. I'd no notion the bloodthirsty spalpeen would have thricked me out of the notes, and so I gived them to him privately, to prevint myself from being robbed by the Dublin thieves."

Officer.—"By the holy St. Proker! there isn't a bigger thief in all Ireland than Rooney, and ye may take your affidavit of that same:—But I'm sorry ye haven't got no witness, because, d'ye see, ye'll not be able to prove that ye gave the villain the money to keep."

Farmer.—"By the holy vargin! I'll take my oath of it."

Officer.—"True, for you, my good friend—but that isn't enough to convict the robber.—I'm afraid ye'll not be able to recover your money."

Farmer.—"Ochone! and is it that you say?—What will I do?—what will I do?"

Officer.—"By the holy powers! a thought is just come across me:—Counsellor Curran is the boy for your money; if there's a man in Dublin can do't, the counsellor is the man. Be aisy with yourself now, and step across to Bill Murphy's, at the Haymow and Pitch-fork. I'll come to ye when the Court rises, and I'll take ye to the counsellor without any more delay: He's as cunning as Old Nick, or even the Divil himself; and, I'll bet ye the worth of the notes, but he'll get them back for ye."

Farmer.—"Long life to ye, masthur!—I'll do that same; and it's not for to spake of the reward I'll give ye."

Officer.—"Don't spake of no reward, my good friend, I'm happy to serve ye; and I'll be still more so, to see that thief Rooney burnt alive for his robberies. He once refused to trust me

a noggin o' whiskey when I was out o' place; and many's the gallon I drank, and paid for on the nail, at his house, before that same; but, by jakers! I'll be revenged now, any how—the brute beast that he is! So now, step over to Murphy's, comfort yourself with a drop of the cratur, and smoke your doodeen, and I'll be with ye in no time."

"Jasus be wid you," replied the countryman, cheering up as he took his departure for the tavern to which he was directed. He had not sat there above an hour when he was joined by the friendly door-keeper, who, after tossing off a noggin of potyeen, accompanied him to Curran's house, in Ely Place.

Mr. Curran heard the man's story, and saw instantly through the whole affair. He knew Rooney, by report, to be a sly, artful scoundrel; and that success in recovering the money would depend on the utmost nicety of management. He resolved, therefore, to give his instructions to the countryman by piece-meal, afraid to trust him with too much at one time, in case of bungling; and being well aware of the confusion of

ideas which any matter of importance invariably produces in the muddy brain of an uneducated Irishman.

Having settled his tactics, he said—"You say, my friend, that this Rooney denies the receipt of the bank notes?"

Farmer.—"I do, yer wurchip; and he's a false, black-hearted thraitor for that same."

"You have no witness?" continued Curran.

Farmer.—"None, my lord—the more's the pity."

Curran.—"Are you willing, then, to be guided entirely by my advice?"

Farmer.—"Yer honour may swear that entirely."

Curran.—"You will take no step but as I direct you?"

Farmer.—"I'll trust myself and the entire thing to the direction of yer wurship's reverence; and I'll not do nor say nothing but what yer honour will tell me is right."

Curran.—"Very well. Now, do you think it possible, by going back to —— What part of the country do you come from?"

Farmer.—"My native plaice, when I'm at home, my lord, is Callagher, in the county of Tipperary."

Curran.—"Very well; do you think it possible by going there, that you could raise, borrow, beg, or steal another hundred pounds, and be back here in a few days?"

Farmer.—"O, murdher!—if it's a hundred pounds of potatees ye mane, I could do it aisily; but as to money, I've a notion its entire unpossible."

Curran.—"But cannot your relatives assist you? You will require it only for a few days; and I give you my word that you shall take it back to Tipperary; as I hope you shall the hundred pounds that you have lost."

Farmer.—"Sure I've got an ould uncle, my mother's own brother, that's worth oceans o' money, and its worth trying for, yer honour."

Curran.—"Certainly: go then, without delay; say to your uncle that one hundred pounds, for a few days, will make your fortune; and see that you do not mention your loss to a living soul; but come to me the instant you return. I'll

take care that the farm shall remain open until you come back,"

Farmer.—"Long life to yer honour's reverence; I'll do that same; an' I'll be back in a jiffy, without any delay in life."

The farmer, buoyed up by the prospect of regaining his lost treasure, departed in good spirits for the county of Tipperary; and played his part so well as to return in a few days with the *needful.*

Having waited on Mr. Curran, the latter sent immediately for the friendly door-keeper, whom he instructed to accompany the countryman to Rooney's, in order to witness the deposit of the second bundle of bank notes. He directed the farmer to plead mistake and intoxication in regard to his former claim, and to apologize accordingly: also to say that he had returned to the country, where he had found his money; and that he was desirous of making amends for his former suspicion of his honesty, by now depositing the money in his hands until the morrow; as he was tired with his journey, and could not transact his business with the landlord that even-

ing. He likewise warned them both to be on their guard, that Rooney might not suspect their intimacy or business; and for that purpose he advised the countryman to enter on the business before the door-keeper made his appearance, which should be exactly at the instant when the notes should be counting out.

They set out accordingly, and the farmer obeyed his instructions to the letter; the villain Rooney, no doubt, anticipating a second booty. But, seeing the door-keeper enter, the farmer took up his cue, and said, "There's the hundred pound, every hap'orth of it: count it yourself, Mr. Rooney, and see it's all right. I'll take a bed with ye to night, and in the morning I'll be wanting it again, to pay for my lase: ye'll be sure not to fail to be giving me the money when I'ax ye for it."

"Oh! never fear Nick Rooney for that," replied the innkeeper; "there are the notes safe in my pocket-book; and I'll put that same under my bolster this blessed night."

The door-keeper saw that now was his time to take a part in the colloquy; accordingly, he ex-

claimed, "Troth, Mistur Nicholas Rooney, and it is not myself would be after trusting such an old Belzebub as you are with any money at all. Much better, sure, for the farmer to lend me a hold of the flimsies; for I'm an honest man ev'ry inch, and I'll keep them as safe for him as if they were lodged in the Bank of Ireland."

"By the holy!" replied the farmer, "but ye're a mighty dacent sort of a brute baste now, to be after thinking that I would trust my money wid you that I never before sat eyes on. And sure, Mr. Rooney ought to give ye a great big bating for the durty suspicion upon his honour."

"Get out of my house, you thief of the world," roared out the landlord to the officer; "what d'ye mane by it, Sur?"

"Ay, bad manners t'ye," rejoined the countryman, "what d'ye mane, Sur, by *com*puting to Mr. Rooney that he is a robber, and the likes of that? But, barring yer ondacency, isn't there yerself there to the fore, ye spalpeen, to bear witness that I giv'd him the money? Get out ye blackguard! it's like enough ye're a swin-

ler yerself, and ye're trying at this moment to pick my pocket: but I knows the thricks of Dublin, I can tell ye."

The officer now saw that it was his turn to make an apology; which he did by swearing that what he had said was only a joke, and "no offence in life;" after which he called for a noggin of whiskey, and took his departure. The countryman, likewise, after a short refreshment, bent his steps towards Ely Place, where he reported progress to Mr. Curran.

"Very well," said the counsellor; "now go back to the inn *alone*, and tell Rooney that you have been informed your landlord sails for England to-morrow morning, and that you want the money now; for, that the only chance you have of getting your lease renewed, is by having it done this evening."

Away hied the farmer, not well knowing what to make of his director's manœuvres; but he punctiliously executed his message, and soon returned with the money: Rooney, though sorry to let the booty out of his grasp, was too well aware of the consequences of denying a transac-

tion, to which there had been (what he thought) even an *accidental* witness.

On putting the notes down on the table, Curran thus addressed his client. "Well, now, my friend, so far, so well: we have now got the rascal fast."

"The Lord above be praised for all his tinder marcies!" replied the countryman; "but, with your wurchip's honour's lave, may I be so bould as to obsarve, that the villain still houlds the money he first tuck from me."

"No such thing!" returned Curran: "Why you blundering blockhead, don't you see that this is the *first* hundred pounds; and that you have nothing to do, to-morrow morning, but to go with your witness, and claim the hundred you left with him to-day?"

"The holy vargin and the blessed saints be good unto you, Misthur Curran, all the days of your life," replied the farmer; "ye advise the right thing any how; and I'll do that same sure enough."

Accordingly, next day, the biter found himself bit, when the countryman arrived with the officer

to claim the money which the latter saw him deposit the day before: he was compelled to make restoration, in order to avoid worse consequences.

Curran often told the story, as an instance of his own ingenuity; and he declared, that if the countryman could not readily have procured the money from his uncle, he himself would have advanced the hundred pounds for the second deposit, so confident was he of the success of his scheme.

Among the numerous puns of which Curran acknowledged himself guilty, was one which the most merciful interpreter of that species of wit must admit to be execrable. He had seen it that very morning in a professed jest-book, and though, confessedly of the lowest description of puns, it has been attributed to several of the most eminent wits of the day. A dentist, who had practised his delicate employment with great success, had at last retired into the country near the Irish metropolis, and built, in the worst taste imaginable, a very superb mansion, which he had decorated with a fine portico, and pillars of the most

barbarous kind. As Curran was passing it one morning on horseback, he met a friend just opposite to the house, who asked him if he could inform him to what order of architecture the pillars belonged. "To the *Tusk*-an, most unquestionably," replied Curran.

Of some of the jests that had been attributed to him, he disclaimed the paternity. Amongst these was a *jeu d'esprit* which belonged to Parsons. M'Nally had a very handsome daughter, who was the subject of considerable assiduities from the officers garrisoned in Dublin. He peremptorily discouraged their flirtations. However, one night, after M'Nally's household had retired to rest, a party of hussars assembled under her windows, and, two or three of them being musicians, serenaded her with a series of impassioned melodies. These were but little to M'Nally's taste, who, in a fit of sudden irritation, threw open the sash, and showered upon the minstrels a most unsavoury stream from a vase, which must not be particularized. The gentlemen, upon whom these unwelcome distillations had descended, began to talk very indignantly,

and of revenging it as a deadly affront. M'Nally felt conscious of having gone rather too far, and, having communicated the matter to Parsons, asked him what apology he ought to make them, if they insisted on his making one. "Pshaw!" said Parsons, "tell them that they came uninvited guests, and you had nothing but *pot-luck* to give them."

Whilst Curran was keeping his terms in the Temple, he attended, as he told us, for the sake of mere curiosity, a debating society carried on by a few persons who had more ingenuity than money, and once or twice he took part in their debates. The society was held at Coach-makers' Hall, and was open to the public, the admission being sixpence. Curran replied to three or four orators; but, not knowing how to designate them by their names, he was driven to the necessity of particularizing them by some distinguishing characteristic of their dress. For instance, he alluded to them thus:—"I by no means concur, Sir, in the observations of the gentleman whose coat is out at elbows. He has been ably and

satisfactorily refuted by the speaker who followed him; and, in my opinion, he has derived but faint assistance from the gentleman with the hole in his black breeches."

MACKINTOSH AND BURKE.

In my remininiscences of "The King of Clubs," I forgot to state that, with the exception of Bobus Smith, Mackintosh was the most efficient in conversation. He was a subtle dialectician, but unsteady to his principles. He seemed to postpone the great aim of metaphysical investigation—the acquisition of truth, to the display of knowledge, and intellectual gladiatorship.

I recollect how we amused ourselves with a domestic incident that befel Mackintosh about the year 1802. He travelled the Norfolk circuit at that time, having found no business on the Home. He had then been delivering his Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations in Lincoln's-Inn Hall. They were well attended by the profession, and by persons of the highest political eminence Mr. Canning and Lord

Liverpool were constantly there. It was a grand display of eloquence, somewhat, indeed, too measured, and monotonous, for Mackintosh was *rhetor plusquam oratore.* His style was disciplined in the school of Robertson and Gilbert Stuart, who, by too cold a correctness, and too religious an adherence to the laws of propriety, had converted English into an almost foreign language. It was unidiomatic English, and, the want of idiom (for idiom constitutes the muscular strength of our tongue), emasculated their compositions. The lectures, however, manifested most unlimited reading, and overflowed with every kind of learning. They embraced an immeasurable field. They almost began with the creation; and the cardinal principles of natural logic, and an inquiry into the history of man's intellectual powers, borrowed, perhaps, from Cudworth, occupied at least six lectures. Mackintosh delighted his class, also, by the embellishments which he threw over these abstruse and uninviting inquiries. He ascribed the doctrine of the association of ideas to Hobbes, as its discoverer, forgetting that Hobbes had it directly

from Aristotle. Coleridge, after his lecture was finished, set him right, and Mackintosh had the candour to acknowledge his error to the class. His hearers were amused with delightful quotations from the Roman classics, which were flowers scattered over the severe subject of jurisprudence, that made it at once fascinating and impressive. In this, he addicted himself to the plan of Grotius, who embellished every page of his *De Jure*, with citations from the Greek and Latin writers, poets, tragedians, and philosophers; and he professed, in this respect, to have imitated that eminent writer, upon whom, in his introductory lecture,* there is the finest panegyric that was ever spoken, or committed to paper.

But yet there was something that was felt to be wanting.—It was discourse, but not logic. He did not seem to stand upon a sound and secure basis of ratiocination. Had his doctrines been submitted to the perusal of the class, instead of being confined to the slight and transient impres-

* See Discourse on the Law of Nature and Nations, as an Introduction to a Course of Lectures, &c. &c. &c. By James Mackintosh, Esq. Cadell, 1801.

sion of the ear, these defects would have been more apparent. The happiest topics, upon which the lecture touched, were, I think, the masterly disquisitions on the theory of Mr. Godwin. Indeed, propositions, which laid the axe to the root of so many old and still prevalent opinions, were regarded with general distrust, and the refutations of the lecturer were, therefore, favourably received.

About the period of these lectures, Mackintosh was on the circuit. He had left his wife near her accouchement. But that accouchement produced a most portentous augmentation of his domestic bliss, or rather his domestic inquietudes. It was as important an omen to his fortunes, which at that time were not prosperous, as the litter of the sow of imperial augury, "*triginta circum ubera natos,*" was to the future fortunes of Rome. He was anxiously looking for letters at Bedford. At Huntingdon, he received one, congratulating him upon the birth of a fine boy. The next circuit town is Cambridge. There he found another dispatch at the post-office, announcing the birth of a second. It was with a

grave smile that he received the congratulations of the circuit-table, upon the coming of another Marcellus. But he had scarcely arrived at Bury, when a third boy was announced to him by letter. The letters had indeed been written after the birth of each of this extraordinary progeny. But the first only was in time for the post; the second and third were written after the respective births they related, but, by some fatality, were not forwarded by one post. This monstrous fit of parturiency, was enough to sadden any man's visage, but he bore it with great philosophy; nor did George Wilson, the amiable and respectable leader of the Norfolk circuit, in the slightest manner discompose him, when, in sly allusion to his Lectures on the Law of Nature and Nations, he proposed, with great gravity, the health of Mrs. Mackintosh, and her three sons—Grotius, Puffendorf, and Vattel.

On this circuit, Mackintosh obtained a certain share of business. The principal part of it fell to the lot of a Mr. Nathaniel Best, generally distinguished at the bar, from the present Chief-Justice of the Common-Pleas, by the appellation

of *second Best*. But Mackintosh fired over their heads. He had not the faculty (an invaluable one) of stating any thing with conciseness, or epigrammatic neatness. From the dry merits of a case, a certain centrifugal quality in his genius, for ever kept him widely aloof. In short, Nisi-Prius pleading was by no means his element. He wanted a wider sea to disport his leviathan length, and to play his gigantic gambols. Had his juridical progeny—Grotius, Puffendorf, and Vattel, arrived at manhood (these birds of jurisprudence were nipt by an untimely fate), they might, perhaps, have been disciplined to the strict trammels of Westminster-Hall; but Nature had not been consulted, when Mackintosh chose the bar for the exercise of his rare and extraordinary talents. When he had an uphill case, he had not the art of concealing his perplexity, and often had recourse to a long speech, in the wanderings of which, he lost sight of the point at issue; or to laborious and clumsy efforts at being jocose, a turn of mind which belonged least to Mackintosh than to any man living. With law, too, as a technical science, or with what is usually

called the practice of the court, he was almost untinctured. He had, therefore, considerable disadvantages to contend with at the bar.

I remember well hearing from a member of the Norfolk circuit, who was sitting next to Harry Blackstone, (a sound lawyer of that day, and a well-known reporter in the Common Pleas,) and near enough to overlook what he was writing, when his duty as junior enjoined him to take notes of a speech which Mackintosh was delivering in an ejectment cause, that poor Blackstone, who was making every struggle to follow him, at last growled in despair, and wrote in the folds of his brief—"Here Mr. Mackintosh talked so much nonsense, that I was obliged to throw down the pen,"—accompanying the remark with a correspondent gesture, and actually jerking the pen across the table, and folding up his papers.

Yet there were cases, involving high and general questions of jurisprudence, in which Mackintosh was extremely powerful. His speech for Peltier, who was prosecuted during the weak and incapable administration of Lord Sidmouth, for a libel on Buonaparte, has been deemed

masterpiece of eloquence and reason. Unquestionably it was a great production, but it was not adapted to a jury; for to a jury Mackintosh, in the slang of the courts, never knew *how to go*. Its merits were transcendently great, but they were relative only. The general topics of Buonaparte's restless and untameable ambition, his gigantic usurpations, the liberty of the press, and the impolicy of instituting such prosecutions at the instance of a potentate, who had left nothing undone to complete and to consolidate his enormous domination, but the extinction of the last remaining free press, that yet existed to plead the cause of the civilized world; these were urged with most splendid effect.

Unhappily, however, amidst all this blaze of eloquence, poor Peltier himself, who had engaged and paid the advocate to defend him, was wholly overlooked. His defence scarcely peeped forth, if I may use the phrase, from under a massy accumulation of general discussions of policy and justice, and the international rights of the two countries. The innocent quality of Peltier's animadversions, who was merely remarking upon

acts of undeniable aggression against the liberties of Europe,—the dastardly spirit of the British government, who, in ordering that information to be filed, had actually been the foremost in obeying the mandates of a foreign usurper, were wholly passed over. I met Windham one day, returning from Concannon's election committee. He had just heard an able and ingenious speech from Mackintosh, and was talking of the pleasure which he had received from it, as an high intellectual treat: but recalling at the same time the impotent defence of Peltier, he could not help qualifying his panegyric, by exclaiming, *Oh! si sic omnia dixisset!* He lamented that Mackintosh, on that most vital question, as it concerned the fortunes and fate of the poor emigrant, should have got up so elaborate an oration, which, notwithstanding the effect it produced, was framed, not for the protection of his client, but for the display of himself. It was nearly as bad as a surgeon, who being called in to perform a specific operation on a certain part of the body, should think nothing of his poor patient, but proceed, for the

purpose of showing his skill in anatomy, to cut and hack the system in general."

As a writer, Mackintosh has been variously estimated. His first work was the celebrated *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. This was afterwards followed by a smaller tract, in a letter to Sir Philip Francis, on Parliamentary Reform. It fell still-born from the press. Of the former work, it would not be easy to say, how much of its merit was genuine and intrinsic, and how much casual and adventitious. Most happily for its reputation, it appeared at a period when party feelings were intensely excited, and when Burke's sublime and almost inspired Commentary upon the French Revolution, diffused so general a despair amongst its partisans, that scarcely any champion would be found hardy enough to descend into the arena against that fearful adversary. Mackintosh's tract appeared, and instantly overtopped the whole brood of answerers, whose ephemeral existence it speedily extinguished. It was universally read, and admired to enthusiasm by those who had embraced the popular cause. Yet, after

Burke, the flow of its sentences was cold and regular, and even its most finished passages seemed unimpassioned and lifeless. The few flowers that adorned it, showed pale and sickly; or, in their gaudiest hues, seemed as if they were forced and stercoraceous. Even Paine, in his celebrated answer to Burke, exhibited, on occasions, much more fervour of imagination than Mackintosh.

Windham said, that there was scarcely to be found in the writings of Burke, of whom he was a warm idolater, a metaphor more beautiful in itself, nor more exactly illustrative, than that which Paine used whilst he was commenting upon Burke's exclusive sympathy for the fallen throne and ruined aristocracy of France, without bestowing an equal portion of commiseration on the people, who had endured the ills of the subverted government. "Mr. Burke pities the plumage," says Paine, "but he forgets the dying bird." "When I read that passage," said Windham, "I almost cried with Pierre,—'I could have hugged the greasy rogue, he pleased me so.'"

From the monotonous and measured style of

eloquence, which is a prominent characteristic of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, Mackintosh's improved taste afterwards weaned him. In the Monthly Review of 1796, he reviewed for Griffiths, the then editor of that journal, Mr. Burke's Thoughts on a Regicide Peace,—and certainly a finer political disquisition hardly ever appeared. All its propositions are admirably limited, and logically stated; and the controversial asperities, which now and then broke forth in the Vindiciæ Gallicæ, having been in a great measure softened by the more subdued state of party feelings at the time he wrote it, as well as by the admiration of that great author, which Mackintosh, in common with every man of taste and letters, must have felt—it was a calm dispassionate animadversion on the excesses to which Burke had pushed his principles, and by no means a marked opposition to the principles themselves.

The constitutional indolence of the writer, for the partiality of friendship has never denied that he was deeply infected with the charms of that seducing syren, did not permit him to pursue the subject beyond two articles; but they attracted

universal attention, and above all other distinctions, they procured him the acquaintance of Burke himself; who, from his sick-bed, (for his constitution was rapidly sinking) invited him to Beaconsfield.

Mackintosh staid there two days, and often related the very interesting conversations that passed during this memorable visit. In the short intervals from pain which his disease allowed him, Burke was frequently cheerful. But the exuberant flow of his mind, which was a tablet on which every variety of knowledge, every species of learning was inscribed, whether recondite or light, was never for a moment suspended. No cloud, whether of sickness or of sorrow, had darkened either his memory or his imagination. When the discourse turned upon politics, then it was evident how he felt for his country, and the great cause in which she then stood foremost amidst the general wreck of Europe. She was his latest vow; but he was not a little querulous of the puerile policy, as he called it, on which she was then carrying on war with the Jacobin,

and he could not forbear breathing portentous prophecies of its result.

Talking of the anti-moral paradoxes of certain philosophers of the new school, he observed, with indignation—"They deserve no refutation but that of the hangman. *Carnificæ potius quam argumentis egent.* Their arguments are, at best, miserable logomachies; base prostitutions of the gifts of reason and discourse, which God gave to man for the purpose of exalting, not of brutalizing his species. The wretches have not the doubtful merit of sincerity; for, if they really believed what they publish, we should know how to work with them, by treating them as lunatics. No, Sir, these opinions are put forth in the shape of books, for the sordid purposes of deriving a paltry gain, from the natural fondness of mankind for pernicious novelties. As to the opinions themselves, they are those of pure, defecated Atheism. Their object is to corrupt all that is good in man—to eradicate his immortal soul—to dethrone God from the universe. They are the brood of that putrid carcase

—that mother of all evil, the French revolution. I never think of that plague-spot in the history of mankind without shuddering. It is an evil spirit that is always before me. There is not a mischief by which the moral world can be afflicted, that it has not let loose upon it. It reminds me of the accursed things that crawled in and out of the mouth of the vile hag in Spenser's 'Cave of Error.'" Here he repeated that sublime, but nauseous stanza. "You, Mr. Mackintosh, are in vigorous manhood; your intellect is in its freshest prime—and you are a powerful writer. You shall be the faithful knight of the romance—the brightness of your sword will flash destruction on the filthy progeny."

Even in the midst of those painful and convulsive spasms which were almost perpetually assailing him, the playfulness of his imagination did not desert him. Whilst Mackintosh was conversing with him, Burke was seized with a vehement spasmodic pain, which was relieved by vomiting. The matter which proceeded from his stomach was watery, but tinged with strong streaks of black. "There," said he, probably

in allusion to the overcharged and exaggerated descriptions imputed to him by his political opponents. "There, I have been accused of being too bold a painter. There it is, now; black and white, light and darkness, Rembrandt to the last."

The conversation once turned accidentally upon his son, the late Mr. William Burke, whose premature death was, it is well known, more the proximate than the predisposing cause of the disorder which brought such a course of protracted suffering upon Mr. Burke, and his death, which happened not very long after Mackintosh's visit. It was unmixed grief. It suffered no comfort, no satisfaction to approach him; even the kind and affectionate cares of Mrs. Burke were unheeded. It was that suppressed sorrow—that broken heart that buries its victims by hundreds—that disease, for which the medicinal art has neither a name nor a category, which never intermits its work, and corrodes unseen even under the smiles which the forms and conventions of life compel us to assume.

"You, Mr. Mackintosh, knew my departed

son well," said Burke. "He was in all respects a finished man, a scholar, a philosopher, a gentleman, and, with a little practise, he would have become a consummate statesman. All the graces of the heart, all the endowments of the mind, were his in perfection. But human sorrowing is too limited, too hedged in by the interruptions of society, and the calls of life, for the greatness of such a loss. I could almost exclaim, with Cornelia, when she bewailed Pompey, (you know that fine passage in Lucan)

'Turpe mori post te solo non posse dolore.'"

It is a remarkable circumstance that William Burke, whom parental idolatry had sketched as a being of the rarest perfections both of genius and understanding, was not a man of extraordinary powers. He was a truly sensible man, well read in the literature of a gentleman; but by no means entitled to such superlative panegyric. By his early death, therefore, Burke was spared the agony of seeing his son fall off from the promise of his youth, and the lofty and sanguine hopes of

his father. Such a disappointment would have been too much for a man of Burke's exquisite sensibility, and it would have inflicted upon him a species of sorrow, equally acute, and not softened by the tenderness and affection with which we mourn for those that are dear to us.

Mackintosh was as ungenially planted at Bombay, to the Recordership of which he went out in 1803, as Lord Erskine on the Chancery Bench, or Curran at the Rolls. A constitutional indolence, the master-vice of those who have arduous duties cast upon them, and important interests to protect, as well as an inaptitude for law in its confined and municipal sense, made him slow, dubious, and timid. In this respect he differed from Eldon, who hesitated from having too much law in his memory, and from being perplexed amongst too great a variety of analogies. The causes, therefore, particularly those in equity, were tediously protracted, and these delays, in a country, the jurisprudence of which recognizes it as a sacred maxim, that speedy injustice is better than tardy justice, were severely felt, and bitterly complained of.

Nor did Sir James feel himself quite easy in the society of the settlement. The European inhabitants were generally either civil servants of the Company, officers in the army, or commercial residents. They were unread and unscholar-like beings, and addicted, as all petty circles are, where the intellect is not in high cultivation, to those local gossipings, without which they could scarcely support the burthen of existence. Against these, Mackintosh waged unrelenting war; but the blockheads in all places are a powerful faction, and they had ultimately the best of it.

This made him fretful and impatient of his exile, and he reminded those who exhorted him to remain in the country till he had acquired a comfortable competency, of the feelings expressed by an eminent Roman, who was then in banishment, in reply to an exhortatory letter from Cicero, advising him to be patient, and to endure the inconveniences of exile with resignation. "You," said he, "are giving me these admonitions, not amidst the mountains of Thrace, but amidst the social delights and philosophical intercourses of Rome; how easy is it to give advice

to tolerate calamities, with which you are not yourself visited." It is certain, however, that Bombay, which is the worst of all our settlements in the East Indies, was far from being a pleasant residence to a man who had been so distinguished a member of the literary circles of the metropolis.

They used to tell an absurd anecdote of Mackintosh's occasional forgetfulness of the ordinary usages of the world, in which, it must be confessed, he was at all times a most inexpert student. Upon his first arrival at Bombay, Jonathan Duncan, the then governor, a quiet amiable man, and fearful to excess of giving offence, wishing to show the new judge every attention that was due to his station, and there being no house ready for the reception of Sir James and Lady Mackintosh, offered them the accommodation of his own garden-house in the island for a few days, till they could find a habitation to their own liking. Sir James accepted the polite offer, and the family took possession of Mr. Duncan's delightful villa. Months and months elapsed; but, the tenants found themselves so comfortable,

that they never dreamed of removing. After they had remained there a twelvemonth, with as much tranquillity as if they had been the absolute proprietors of the mansion, Mr. Duncan, who was himself desirous of inhabiting it, thinking that the recorder, through some mistake, had conceived it to be his own property, resolved to give him some intimation that it was not so; and in order, therefore, to exercise some act of ownership, he sent a man with orders to dig up a sack of potatoes in the garden, for the use of his own table. The man was seen by Lady Mackintosh from the veranda, who, convinced that he was purloining her vegetables, sent a posse of servants after him, to take away the potatoes, and turn out the trespasser. Mr. Duncan now thought that it was time to act with less delicacy or reserve. He wrote a note, accordingly, to Sir James and Lady Mackintosh, very politely assuring them, that the house and garden were his own property, and not that of Sir James or his lady. The hint was taken, and Jonathan re-entered into possession. There can be no doubt that the circumstance arose from pure mistake. Sir James

conceived it, probably, to be an official house belonging to his station, and reposed upon that conviction, without taking any pains to ascertain its correctness.

Sir James has not been highly distinguished as a parliamentary debater. He hardly ever dashes, to use Tierney's phrase, *ding-dong* into a debate. It is chiefly as a speaker of elaborate dissertations upon general questions of international polity, that he is heard with attention; and he repays it. He puts forth much that strengthens, all that adorns his reasoning. But the House of Commons is not the place for the *umbratiles doctores*. His language, indeed, is always polished, and occasionally nervous. The total want, however, of graceful action and pleasing manner,—the rattling harshness of his dialect, which seems to be of no province or country, but peculiarly his own; above all, the iron inflexibility of his tones, are insuperable obstacles to his speaking either usefully or impressively in that assembly. Charles Moore, the brother of the unfortunate general, and contemporary with Mackintosh at the bar, and the most consummate imitator of public

speakers that ever was heard, used to say, that he took the greatest pains to catch Jemmy's tones; but, fortunately, whilst he was making the effort, and almost despairing of success, an old Jew clothesman happened to pass under the window of his chambers, whose cry was so exactly in unison with the intonations of Mackintosh's voice, that he followed him for a quarter of an hour; and was, by means of that lesson, enabled to give us a tolerable specimen of Mackintosh's delivery of his lectures, which he executed with great spirit, and to our unspeakable amusement.

But Sir James Mackintosh, as a thinker and a writer, has secured a less brilliant, perhaps, but less transient reputation, than that of a parliamentary orator. Had he aspired to a reputation still more valuable, he would have kept the promise, that has so long tortured both readers and booksellers; he would have commenced or completed his *celebrated* historical work, which has never appeared. It was to have been continued down to the period of the French Revolution, too late a period perhaps (a recent failure has

proved it) for legitimate history; but the difficulty would have vanished in his hands, had he sat down to it with spirit and resolution. It is, I fear, destined to await the Greek calends.

I. O. U.

THE Sixty-sixth Regiment of Foot, commanded by General Gabbet, was quartered, some years ago, at Nenagh, in Ireland, a populous and fashionable neighbourhood, where the officers had received great civility and attention. To return this, in some sort, the general invited all the gentry round about to a ball and supper, the evening before their departure for other quarters.

However reluctant the writer may be to mention this fact, truth demands the avowal; that, though the general was a most magnificent fellow, it was very difficult to extract payment of the debts which he was in the habit of contracting, from the untoward circumstance of his expenditure vastly exceeding his means. Whatever debts he did pay, however, were usually dis-

charged by his *Aide-de-camp*, Major Vowell, a gentleman of as much tact in the settlement of a bill, as his commanding officer was in contracting the same: the major was quite *au fait* at lopping off extra charges; or, if need were, in genteelly evading payment altogether.

On the day appointed, Nenagh, and its vicinity, were all in motion. The company being arrived at the principal inn, or hotel, which was kept by one Forrester,—tea, coffee, and excellent punch were served—card-tables were displayed—the dance commenced—dozens upon dozens of the best claret and champaigne were decantered, and quaffed; all was hilarity; and, at length, a most splendid supper was set before the guests. During the whole of this time, the gallant general, with his grand chamberlain and secretary, the major, did the honours of the assembly, in a manner which did great *honour* to the regiment. They were to be seen every where, in polite attendance on the guests—the male portion of whom, loudly and repeatedly expressed their satisfaction, by toasts and healths "to the Sixty-sixth!" whilst the ladies sighed at the prospect of being to be so

soon bereaved of the society of so noble a corps!

The repast being at an end, the ball recommenced; and now was the time judged most fit by Forrester to present his bill. For this purpose, he sought for the general throughout all the apartments, but in vain, for the latter was nowhere, to be found: he and Major Vowell had slipped off, and taken their departure, just in the nick of time when poor Forrester's appearance was suspected.

At length the poor fellow thus addressed Captain Breviter:—"Blood and thunder! captain, where is the general?"

Breviter, perfectly understanding the drift of the question, replied,—"O, damn it, Forrester, our general is great at a retreat."

The landlord, who was greatly chagrined by this intelligence, exclaimed:—"By Jasus, then, has he walked off with himself entirely?—If so, by the holy poker! I'm clane done out of house and home. But, captain, sure enough his honur has left Vowell to settle the score?"

Breviter, laughing heartily, replied:—"O, yes, by G—d! he has left you three Vowells—I—O—U."

An Irish *ex* M. P., essaying to relate the above anecdote one night at Boodle's, in the presence of several gentlemen who had heard it before, commenced his narrative by saying, "It was the funniest thing he had ever heard in his life;" but, unfortunately, when he came to the winding up, he plainly discovered that he was quite ignorant of the true meaning of the joke;—for, to the question by the landlord—"*But, captain, sure enough his honour has left* VOWELL *to settle the score?*" Mr. M—— made Breviter answer, "O, yes, by Jasus, Forrester, he has left you five or six of them—A—E—I—O—U—Y."

Poor M——, as he finished this list of the vowels, laughing immoderately, excited much greater merriment than he could have done by relating the bon-mot in its genuine state.

THE BANK OF KILLARNEY.

"To speak of the banking system in Ireland during the late war, and, indeed, at the present day," said an Irish gentleman, one evening at Brookes's, "is as bad as talking of *fire* to a man who has been burned out, and lost all his property in the flames. To such an extent was this species of robbery carried, at one time, that provincial or country notes were issued for sums so low as *three-pence;* whilst those for six shillings were actually accounted high."

Another gentleman having expressed amazement at this state of things, the first speaker gave the following instance of the truth of his assertion:—

"In the town of Killarney," said he, "was one of these banks; the proprietor of which was

a kind of saddler, whose whole stock in that trade was not worth forty shillings; but which forty shillings, if even so much, was the entire amount of his capital in the banking concern.

"I once accompanied a large party of English ladies and gentlemen to that enchanting spot; where, having amused ourselves for a few days, we were on the point of returning to Dublin, when one of the party recollected that he had in his possession a handful of the saddler's paper. Accordingly we all set out, by way of sport, to have them exchanged; our principal object being to see and converse with the proprietor of such a bank.

"Having entered the shop, which barely sufficed to admit the whole company, we found the banking saddler hard at work, making a straddle. One of the gentlemen thus addressed him:—

"'Good morning to you, Sir: I presume you are the gentleman of the house.'

"'At your sarvice, ladies and gentlemen,' returned the saddler.

"'It is here, I understand, that the bank is kept?' continued my friend.

"'You are just right, Sir,' replied the mechanic; 'this is the Killarney Bank, for want of a better.'

"My friend then said,—'We are on the eve of quitting your town; and as we have some few of your notes, which will be of no manner of use to us elsewhere, I'll thank you for cash for them.'

"The banker replied, 'Cash! plase yer honour, what is that? is it any thing in the leather line?—I have a beautiful saddle here as ever was put across a horse; good and chape, upon my say so. How much of my notes have you, Sir, if you plase?'

"This question required some time for an answer, calculation being necessary; at length my friend counted them out, as follows:—

	£.	s.	d.
Three notes for 3d. each	0	0	9
Two do. for 4d. each	0	0	8
Two do. for 6½d. each, half a thirteen	0	1	1
Three do. for 8½d. each, three-fourths of a thirteen	0	2	1½
Carried forward . . .	0	4	7½

Brought forward . . .	0	4	7½
Two notes for 9d. each	0	1	6
One do. for 1s. 1d., or one thirteen .	0	1	1
One do. for 1s. 6d.	0	1	6
One do. for 3s. 3d. or three thirteens .	0	3	3
One do. for 3s. 9½d., or three thirteens and a half	0	3	9½
	£0	15	9

" 'There, Sir,' said he, 'are no less than *sixteen* of your *promises to pay*, for the amazingly large sum of *fifteen shillings* and *ninepence*, sterling money.'

" 'By the powers, then, it's yer honour may say that thing; for, if sterling means *true to the back-bone*, it's the Killarney notes will keep out for the year round, without no changing at all at all.'

" 'No doubt, no doubt,' said our spokesman; 'but we are upon the eve of departure, and shall require change on our journey.'

" 'By Jasus, ye will require that same thing, sure enough; but, I vow to my God, I've no more silvur money in the place nor these four

tinpinnies, and a few harpurs,* as isn't worth yer lordship's notice.'

"'Good Heavens! Sir,' returned the gentleman, 'how is it possible that you can carry on the banking business on so slender a capital?'

"'O, by the hokey! aisy enough, my dear,' replied the banker; 'the craturs are delighted to have my beautiful notes; for there is very little other money stirring in these parts, and they buy their potatis and butter-milk with them; and may be a sheep and a pig or two, now and then; and so the notes pass on from one to the other very comfortably.'

"'But you are continually liable to have them sent in upon you for their value,' observed one of the company.

"'By the holy Paul, and St. Peter to boot! that's true enough, yer wurchip: wheniver any of the farmers wants a horse-collar, or a straddle, or other harness, they brings me a handful of the paper; and it's myself niver refuses to give them a good article in exchange.'

* Irish halfpence, having the harp impressed on one side.

"'Do you mean to say, then,' continued the gentleman, 'that your notes are never required to be cashed?'

"'Cashed!' echoed the banker; 'is it *changed* ye mane?'

"'Certainly,' replied the querist.

"'By the powers of Venus! it's that same is a great expense to me! The craturs bring me back the notes when they get ould and ragged; and it's myself never yet refused to change them for beautiful new ones, fresh from Dublin city; and I puts my name to them to make them go the faster.'

"Here the whole party, finding it impossible to restrain their mirth, set up a loud shout of laughter; upon which the banker thus continued:—

"'Upon my say so, I'm right glad to find so worchipful a company enjoy their merriment; but it's myself knows well the power o' money it costs to get them engraved so beautiful, and to get them printed on such nice thick paper—ay, five hundred at a time, by Jasus!'

"'Do you mean to say, then,' said the first

gentleman, 'that the holders of your notes never demand the lawful money of the country in exchange for them?'

"'Sure, yer lordship, isn't the notes themselves lawful enough any how? But is it silver ye mane?'

"'Certainly,' returned the querist.

"'Oh, by the powers!' replied the banker, 'the people hereabouts wouldn't insult me by axing the question: if they did, may be the bank would stop payment; and then there would be no money at all at all. No, by Jasus! they would be sorry to do any such thing; they give the notes to one another, when they're tired o' keeping them, or when they want to buy any thing. I get more bodher, axing yer honur's pardon, in changing the notes for the gentry as comes to see the Lakes, than from all the rest o' my paper put together. The big divil fly away with the Lakes o' Killarney! say I.'

"'Then, I presume, Sir,' said the gentleman, holding out the notes, 'we have no occasion to waste more time in endeavouring to obtain payment for this parcel of paper of yours?'

"'I should be sorry, most noble,' returned the banker, 'to waste any more of your lordship's time, or of those sweet, beautiful ladies and gentlemen; but, I have an iligant bridle here, as isn't to be matched in Yoorup, Aishy, Afrikey, or 'Merikey: its lowest price is 15*s.* 6½*d* —we'll say 15*s.* 6*d.* to yer lordship. If ye'll be plased to accept of it, there will be twopence halfpenny, or a threepenny note coming to yer lordship: and that will close the business at once.'

"'Really, Sir,' said the gentleman, laughing, 'I have no occasion for the bridle: it would only be an incumbrance to me.'

"'May I have the bouldness, then, to ax when yer lordship will lave town?' inquired the banker.

"'Our carriages are at the door of the inn,' replied the gentleman, 'and we only wait for the adjustment of this affair with your bank.'

"'By the Holy! how unfortunate!' exclaimed the banker, scratching his head: 'but, as naether saddle nor bridle lie in yer lordship's way, if ye could but just delay yer journey till the Cork mail comes in, I expect, by the coach,

a thirty shilling Bank of Irelander; and then we'll settle the business in a jiffy: though, upon my deed, and deed, and double deed! you have no occasion to be in the least dread or uneasiness about the notes; becase, d'ye see as how, there is not a banker from this to Dublin, ay, or to Galway, that would not be proud to take Jack Ryan's paper.'

"'That is not so very certain, my good fellow,' returned one of the gentlemen; 'the people on the road know us to be strangers, and they will require payment in the legal coin of the realm.'

"'Pray, Sir,' said the banker, eagerly, 'does yer honur mane to take the road to Millstreet? because, as how, you must go that way any how, there being no other. Oh! then, it is there, Mr. Cotter will be glad to see so fine a company at his iligant hotel; and joyful will he be to entertain you with the best, both for man and horse, for the notes of the Killarney Bank.'

"It being in vain to think of any exchange of this non-circulating medium, the English gentleman not attaching the same importance to it as the banker, the party wished him a good morn-

ing, and took their leave; laughing heartily at the adventure.

"It is an ill wind, however, which blows nobody good; when the party arrived at the inn door, they found the carriages surrounded by nearly two hundred unfortunate mendicants; amongst whom the gentlemen let fly their notes, in order to have a passage cleared; and took their departure whilst the miserable creatures were scrambling for the alms."

Hundreds of anecdotes might be related of the Irish Banks; but, the following will suffice to show the general *disrepute* in which their notes were held among the people; although the necessities of the latter compelled them to pass from one to the other, this base fabrication, instead of real money; or, indeed, instead of even *a paper representative payable on demand.*

CHANGING A NOTE.

It was the custom in the City of Cork, during the French war, and, perhaps, is still, for a number of the respectable citizens to assemble every

morning at the post-office window; waiting the delivery of letters and newspapers. Amongst them were generally to be seen a banker of the name of Bonwell, and a gentleman of the name of Mitchell, who was strongly suspected of republican principles. Whilst they waited, politics were generally the topic of conversation: a subject on which Bonwell held forth with energy; making up by the loudness of his voice, for lack of sense or argument.

One day he expatiated, in glowing terms, on the merit of *consistency;* although, pending the American War, he had given many proofs of attachment to liberty; and, indeed, had openly advocated American Independence.

This was by some of the company thrown in his teeth; and one gentleman said, "that he had changed his political opinions only since he had commenced the profitable trade of banker."

Upon this, Bonwell became quite furious, and exclaimed, "It is a lie, Sir!—a d—d lie!—Where is the man who will dare to charge me with inconsistency?"

Mitchell, seeing that it was time to interpose,

to prevent a challenge, and at the same time desirous of hitting the banker in the tenderest part, said, in a quiet, but most sarcastic tone, "Upon my word, gentlemen, this accusation against Mr. Bonwell is really *unjust;* for, to my own knowledge, and, indeed, to that of us all, he has not *changed his note these three years* at all events:" alluding to the invariable practice of the Cork Bank, of exchanging one set of notes for another parcel of the same paper.

This capital repartee set all to rights; for it caused a loud laugh against the banker, and was the means of preventing a settlement of disputes of a more *grave* character elsewhere.

IRISH WIT AND CHARACTER.

THERE is no country under heaven where wit is more keen and extemporaneous than in Ireland. All ranks possess it; but the lower orders, in particular, are noted for the quickness and ingenuity of their replies. Whether this peculiar gift arises from any innate quality of soil or air; from their temperate vegetable diet; or from their mercurial, careless temperament, which enables them to make light of any subject, however serious or distressing; or whether it proceeds from all these causes combined, is a point which must remain undetermined. Though a devotee in his religion, the puritanical mien, and cautious manners of the Scot would sit heavily on an Irishman, and render him uncomfortable; and though sincere, warm-hearted, and

generous, his native politeness preserves him at an equal distance from the bluntness (miscalled *honesty*) of an Englishman. In short, if the Irish people resemble any other nation, it is the French: they are equally gay, volatile, and thoughtless: would that they were as happy!

The above question respecting the native wit of the Irish was agitated on one occasion by a party at Brookes's, and innumerable anecdotes were related in illustration. The writer presents the following to his reader, being those which come most readily to his memory.

Astley, the celebrated equestrian, had an amphitheatre in Dublin, where he often experienced rough usage from the lower orders, on account of his incessant expressions of ultra-loyalty; which loyalty, however, recommended him to the favour of the people in power.

On the convalescence of the King, George the Third, in 1789, Lord Buckinghamshire celebrated the happy event by a splendid display of fire works on Stephen's Green; the whole to be conducted by Astley. When every thing was

duly arranged, our pyrotechnist set off for the castle, to apprise the viceroy; and, on his way, stationed an artillery soldier on the leads of a house, at the top of Grafton Street, who was to let off a signal rocket for the commencement of *le feu d'artifice.*

This arrangement was overheard by some disloyal wags, who moved down the street after Astley. Having allowed as much time to pass as would suffice for him to go to the castle, probable delays there, and return, out roared one of them in the voice of one in haste, and exactly resembling Astley's, the sound being pitched to the roof of the mouth, and imitating the London cockney dialect—"Halloo! you 'tilleryman! let auf that there rocket!"

Away went the rocket, and off went the fireworks; of which there was not one scintilla remaining by the time the *cortége* arrived from the castle; to the extreme joy and amusement of the Dublin wags; but to the great mortification of poor Astley, who stamped and swore like a trooper.

He offered twenty guineas reward for the dis-

covery of the delinquent; but this only made the affair more public; for no one would 'peach, and whenever he performed at his theatre, his ears were sure to be saluted, from the gallery, with the ominous words—"Halloo! you 'tillery-man! let auf that there rocket!"

At a large party in Munster, the celebrated O'Connor was asked, and gave permission that his piper should be present to entertain the company. This man was considered to be the most capital performer on the bag-pipes, of his time, in all Ireland. On the present occasion, he played several airs so delightfully, and with such expression, that all were in raptures.

In the course of the evening, one of the guests, desirous of making a display of his loyalty, called for "*God save the King!*" To which the minstrel objected, saying, "he did not play that tune." The gentleman persevered in his request; but the more importunate he was in urging it, the more obstinate was the piper in declining to play.

At length, having tried the poor man upon

every key, he demanded, "if the air was not grand, sublime," &c. &c. : to which the minstrel readily acceded.

"Why not play it, then," continued the gentleman.

"I don't approve of the words," was the reply.

The gentleman endeavoured to obviate this objection, by observing that the company did not want the words; they wished merely to hear the air.

"Impossible to separate them," replied the minstrel; "I make my pipes *speak!*"

"Much has been said," observed an Irish nobleman, "respecting potatoes, as food for the Irish; as if they could not eat or drink like other people!—in fact, there are some persons who actually imagine that Paddy dislikes the very *sight* of fish, flesh, and fowl; and that he has no notion of any kind of drink save raw potyeen, or whiskey!

"That the potatoe contains a considerable quantity of nutritious matter, cannot be denied; but that three-fourths of a nation, from whatever

cause, should be compelled to feed entirely upon this root, or *starve*, is disgraceful to the government which permits such a state of things; whilst it exhibits to an astonished world a greater degree of patience under oppression, than was ever before shown by any nation upon the face of the earth. I once asked an Irishman, whose wretched family was greedily devouring a dish of potatoes in their skins, why he did not kill one of his pigs to feed himself and children?—he answered, 'Oh! by the powers! your honur, that's more than I daur do!—If I only laid a finger on a pig, or a cow, or a sheep, with intent to kill, I'd have the landlord, and the parson, and the tithe proctor upon me, before I could turn myself round! No, no, masthur, the craturs must go to pay the rent, and tythes, and other dues, that myself knows nothing of; the divil fly away with them all!—if I can get a little dhrop of milk for the *young* childer, with their praetees, sure it's myself is content; for it's beyond the power of me to make things better.' But, let the opinion of one Irishman suffice for all upon this subject. I one day asked a poor fellow whether he was fond of potatoes,

He answered, 'Plaise yer honur, I do'nt dislike them at all;—*sure, they're very well with a bit o' maet.*' Now, this poor fellow, and all his equals for miles round, to my certain knowledge, never ate a bit of animal food, from the first day of January until the thirty-first of December, except a morsel of old ram, or bull beef, for *three days* at Christmas!

"But to show you, gentlemen," continued the speaker, "that the Irish, though fond enough of animal food, are temperate in their diet (for they are by no means gross feeders in any case, whatever attachment they may have to good drinking, and *plenty of it*), I will relate a conversation, in which a gentleman of my acquaintance bore a part."

My friend, travelling by the Cork mail to Dublin, on a fine summer's evening, having abandoned his seat within, mounted the coach box, where he was much entertained with the sallies of wit from the coachman and guards.

Learning that the coachman had been in the Tiperrary militia, and in England, he was desirous to hear *his* account of the sister kingdom; and

said to him, "So, Pat, you have been in England; what do you think of that place?"

"My name is Michael, plaise your honour;" returned the coachman, with a slight degree of hauteur.*

"I ask your pardon, Michael," said the gentleman, "I meant no offence."

"I thank your honur," replied the coachman, "I would niver suspect it."

"Well, Michael," continued the querist, "what do you think of England?"

"Indeed, Sir, it is a fine country," responded Michael; "and what wonder is that!—aren't the Sassonacs plundering the four quarters of the globe, and Ireland in the bargain, to help out their extravagance? Ounly look at our own poor country—what a figure they have made of it!"

"You are a bit of a politician, Michael," observed the gentleman.

"Plase yer honur," replied the coachman, "it does not require much knowledge for an Irishman

* No Irishman likes to be called *Pat*, unless his name be Patrick: he considers such familiarity to be an insult to his country as well as to himself.

to find that out—it is plain enough, by Jasus! every step ye take,"

"But, Michael, what do you think of the *people* of England?" continued the gentleman.

"Upon my say so, Sir," responded the coachman, "they seem to be a mighty honest and good kind of people—that is, as far as they would let one of us know them; though, certainly, I must say, I took notice of one great fault amongst them."

"What is that?" inquired the traveller.

"They are entirely too fond of glottuning themselves with flesh maet," returned Michael, "it must make them cru'l and bloody-minded —what else is it that makes them so fond of hanging one another?—didn't these two ears of mine hear sintence of death pronounced upon a poor starving cratur of a Lancashire woman, with three smaal childer, for ounly taking an apronfull of potaetis, that wur spilt from a cart on the road?"

"That was very horrible, Michael," observed the gentleman; "but, perhaps, you, yourself, are not fond of flesh meat?"

"In raison, plase yer honur," replied the coachman, "upon my word! if your honur was to give me the run of your larder, I wouldn't touch flesh more than once a day, five days in the week."

"Michael," said the gentleman, archly, "suppose I was to give you the run of my cellar?"

"Oh, by the powers! masthur," replied coachee, "I'd drink yer conic till it comed out o' my nose. Wine and good sperrits gladden the heart of man, and make him jovial; whilst the maet makes a tiger and a slug of him at the same time."

At an election for the representation of the City of Cork, a Mr. Bousfield was what is called the popular candidate; and, after some days sharp polling, his tally not being ready, he directed one of his counsel to keep a voter of Colonel (the present Lord) Hutchinson as long as he could, to gain time.

It was well known that the *elector* in question was what, in Ireland, is technically designated a *Buck*—that is, one who is bribed to swear to a freehold he never possessed. This man claimed the privilege of voting, by virtue of a tenement in

Maypole Lane, which he described as a *slated house, built of stone, three stories high*; although every house in the lane in question consisted but of one story, and were built of mud, and thatched.

The counsel requested the *buck* to give particulars of the dwelling—asking him how it was inhabited? To which he replied—"I live on the ground-floor myself, where I carry on my trade of shoe making; my first-floor is let; and the garret is untenanted at present."

"And how much rent do you pay for the house?" continued the counsel.

"Oh, by the hokey! is it tell ye my bargain?—catch me at that, any how! By the powers of Moll Kelly! if I was to tell such a thing to a laayer he would put a leg under me in a jiffy, and spin me into the street."

"The barrister was delighted with the loquacity of his man—it being exactly what he wanted, to prolong the time; and he began again: "My good friend," said he, "I have been often in Maypole Lane, and I never happened to see such a house there as you describe; perhaps you mistake the name of the street?"

"There's a bull for ye!" cried the voter—"if you will make a street of a lane, I am done with you."

This was a poser for the barrister; but he recommenced the charge, determined to run the *buck* from the top of the house to the bottom; accordingly, he asked "how much rent he received for the attic?"

"There, again," said the voter, appealing to the sheriff; "after telling him I had no tenant there at present."

"Well, how much do you get for the first-floor?" continued the barrister, — "there, at least, you have lodgers."

"I said no such thing," retorted the buck.

The barrister here appealed to the sheriff, who decided in his favour.

"By the rod of St. Patrick! then," said the voter, "I'll hould you a sneaker o' punch I never gived any such answer:—how could I say lodgers, when I have only Mister Kagle, the blind piper, in my chamber?"

"How much rent does the piper pay, then?" demanded the barrister.

"By the holy St. Proker!—find that out by yer larning," answered the buck.

Colonel Hutchinson now addressed the sheriff, observing, that "he saw no necessity for so strict a scrutiny; for, that the voter was ready to take the freeholder's oath, which was all that could be required of him." To which the barrister replied, that "when so flagrant an imposition was attempted, as to tender a vote out of a slated house, *three stories high*, in Maypole Lane, it was the duty of the sheriff to reject his vote, or call upon the assessor for his opinion."

The assessor gave judgment in favour of the scrutiny, and the barrister began again; saying, with a smile, "Come, now, my *honest* fellow, do tell us how much ground-rent you pay for your house?"

The voter replied—"By the powers of daicency! ye art so cruel civil, that I'd be sorry to be out-done in that line:—to tell ye the plain truth, then, the divil a penny I pay at all, at all, for it."

"Upon my honour. I believe you," said the barrister; "but, regarding this tenement of

yours; I think I must pay you a visit in Maypole Lane."

"In troth, I'll be happy to see you," returned the voter; "will ye now give me the favour of your company to dinner on Sunday? — you shall have a leg of mutton and turnips, done to a tanzay."

"Let me, first, be better acquainted with your residence," replied the barrister, "lest I lose my way:—once more, then, if you please."

"To it, my hearty," rejoined the buck.

The man of law, now looking very wise, and raising his voice, said, "You have told us that you occupy the ground-floor yourself; that your first-floor is let to Mr. Kagle, the piper; and that your upper story is empty?"

The buck, casting a look of indescribable archness at his examiner, shaking his head, and gesticulating with his hand, exclaimed, in reply, "By the full moon! counsellor, I am afraid your *own* upper story is empty!

The learned gentleman was *floored*, and the auditory, who had all along laughed heartily, now burst into a general roar. The buck, however,

gave his *vote:* and the dexterous man of the robe gained his point of spinning out the time until the hour of adjournment, which enabled his client to be prepared for the next morning.

At another election, for the *county* of Cork, the contest between Lord Kingsborough and Mr. Townsend was sharp, of long duration, and conducted with every species of trick and manœuvre. One of the methods adopted for obtaining votes was, by inducing *Protestants* * to swear to ten-pound freeholds, who never, in their lives, were owners of a single rood of land!

One of these bucks, or *gentlemen-freeholders*, being brought up for Lord Kingsborough, Roger Barratt, the counsellor for Townsend, examined, and cross-examined him, most minutely, and abused him most vehemently; but, maugre every legal objection, the buck gave his vote. Whilst he was doing this, Townshend's agent pointed out to Barratt's notice, a chain and key which hung from the voter's fob, to give him the ap-

* The Catholics had not then the elective franchise

pearance of respectability; and remarked, that he had taken notice, that these very identical appendages had been worn by the last score of Kingsborough's bucks; "and that he was positively certain there was no watch attached to them."

"We'll see to that," said Barrett; and calling to the buck as he was descending from the poll-table, he said, "My good friend, what was your reason for taking up so much of our time by your crooked answers? You have been on that table for at least two hours."

"More shame for you, counsellor," replied the voter, "to be after keeping a jontleman from his 'musements and his 'creaitions, whilst you was but following yer trade of talking all the while! But aren't ye 'shamed o' yerself, Mister Barrett, to tell sich a big thumping lie in the face of the court, as to say that I ha' been here two hours?"

"What time was it, then," returned Barrett, "when you mounted the table?"

"I don't know," replied the *freeholder*, "I did not look at *my watch.*"

"Well," continued Barrett, thinking that he had the buck in his trap; "I can tell the very

minute that you were roused from your lair:—tell us what o'clock it is by *you* now?"

"Is it after the manner ye behaved to me?" returned the voter; "By Jasus! I wouldn't give ye the satisfaction of telling ye the time o' day: let the same watch that tould ye when I comed, inform ye of the time when I made my escape from sich incivility; so, good morning to ye, Mister Counsellor Barrett!"

FRENCH EMIGRANTS IN ENGLAND.

AMONG this body of unfortunate foreigners, a certain M. Dumont was well known and esteemed by many individuals of rank and literature in London. Dumont was of a lively character, and he contrived to make his companionship agreeable, in spite of his eternal citations from "*Les Jardins*" of his friend, the Abbé de Lisle. Whilst the storm of the French revolution was only yet impending, Dumont transmitted to England a considerable portion of his property, and subsequently lived here in easy and tranquil independence, giving frequent *petits soupers*, in the Parisian taste, where many of the most intelligent of the emigrants used to assemble.

Dumont was also a frequent and welcome

visitant at Lansdowne-House, and was beloved and valued by many persons of high distinction, English or foreign. From morning to night he was employed in acts of beneficence towards his less fortunate countrymen. It was silent unostentatious beneficence, which, working its way, like a subterraneous current, never alarmed the pride or the delicacy of those whose hearts it gladdened.

Can there be a more unquestionable test of true and unaffected benevolence than these quiet ministerings to want and woe? Our emigrant used to remark, and that too without the satisfactions of national self-love, which would derive a complacency from the contrast, too often to be found in this respect, amongst our own countrymen, that he scarcely ever met with an instance of an unworthy return of his kindness either in actual ingratitude, or an improvident and extravagant abuse of it. Amid that gloomy wreck of all their comforts, the emigrants lived with the most scrupulous economy, feeling a species of cheerfulness, if not of gladness, under every pri-

vation. And of these were many whose splendid hotels were, not many months before, scenes of unfailing plenty, elegant hospitality, and social gladness. Indigence did not affright them, nor lull them into that supine and cheerless indolence, that torpid inactivity of the mind and its faculties, the most fearful adversary which he, on whom the hand of Heaven lies heavy, has to encounter.

Their little accomplishments, once the spontaneous amusements of their leisure, were now resorted to as the sources of existence. Marquisses, Counts, Barons, taught Italian, French, music, drawing, and even dancing. English charity was not withheld on this occasion; but it was almost a nation holding out its hands for food. The pensions afforded by the British government were necessarily limited.

Dumont mentioned to us a remarkable and affecting instance, in which a widowed lady, la Marquise de * * * * *, of high birth and almost royal ancestry, had refused the pension proffered to her, and had retired to a garret, where she

was literally pining in want. Such was almost the insane excess to which she carried her feelings of delicacy and dignity.

In this melancholy exigence, the poor lady was found by one of her compatriots, who had formerly belonged to her household, and had been one of her confidential laquais. He was indefatigable in discovering her retreat, and many an inquiry had been baffled before he found it. From his own scanty pittance he contrived to protract the existence of his unfortunate mistress, though the little that was left was barely adequate to sustain his own. Lest this might be discovered by the jealous pride of his mistress, with an amiable hypocrisy, he assured her that there was quite enough for both, beseeching her not to abridge her repasts.

As nature, however, could not go on long in this way, he conquered his sense of debasement, and stationed himself as a beggar, from morn till night, at the entrance of a well-frequented alley at the west end of the town. The slender gains of this occupation he carried home every night;

but carefully concealed from his mistress the manner in which he had been employed. He never approached her without the utmost respect, and the usual obeisances of a lacquey of the old *regime;* and he passed his nights in a small outhouse.

Misfortune had soured a temper, naturally haughty, and she frequently scolded the faithful creature for staying away so long, and leaving her quite unattended. To these reproaches he never made the least reply, continuing, till her death, the same affectionate ministration to her necessities.

With this affecting story, Dumont became acquainted by mere accident. It was too late, however, to force relief upon the unbending spirit of the Marquise, who, nevertheless, by a singular sophistry in her pride, condescended to receive it at the hands of her former servant, assuring herself, that she could reward and indemnify him, upon her return (which she so fondly expected) to her wealth and territory. Dumont, much to his honour, made the faithful creature, whose

cares had lengthened out her life, *comfortable* for the residue of his own.

I was pleased with an ingenious argument of Dumont's upon the question,—whether the art of acting was rendered more perfect, when the actor *himself* felt the passions of the scene? Dumont contended that the maxim of Horace,

"Si vis me flere, dolendum est prius," &c. &c. &c.

was wholly inapplicable to the theatre. The true painter, he said, selects only from Nature, that which is picturesque, or fit to be painted. If he cannot find it in Nature, as is frequently the case, he combines that which is consonant to Nature, or at least that which does not degrade her, with that which she furnishes to his hands. So, a good actor, when he represents the stormy rage, or the fixed despair, or the sudden sorrows of humanity, must not watch, and literally copy, the exact effects of those emotions in their *actual* operation on the countenance, the voice, the gesture, but he will naturally consider what is

most befitting to human dignity in his representation of those passions. Were he to watch their operations in common and domestic life; were he, for example, to transcribe, exactly, the effect *really* produced there by some instantaneous stroke of grief, and faithfully imitate the workings of it, he would represent what is essentially deformed and unseemly; for grief, as well as the other violent passions, is deformity, producing attitudes that are ungraceful, and unfit to be copied. The maternal grief of the Niobe is the *beau-ideal* of grief—not as it would, in *real* life, be expressed by a mother, who suddenly sees her children prostrated by the bolts of heaven. It is the grief most becoming our nature; the most exalted species of it, which holds forth man as a being, not debased by affliction, but still claiming the compassion of Heaven, and the reverence of his fellow-creatures. Whereas, the actor, whose nerves are so weak that he really *feels* the emotions, which it is his province only to excite in others, will represent their natural, not their moral or *picturesque* effect. He will blubber,

and whine, and display sorrow, not in its grand and majestic outlines, but in puny and disgusting details; and, according to the degree of indolence, which he permits to his sensibilities, will he recede from the perfection of his art.

ROGERS, THE POET.

THE author of the "Pleasures of Memory" was not, when I knew him, some years ago, the indefatigable punster it is now the fashion to represent him. He was addicted to a dry and often bitter sarcasm, which was not much relished; but his conversation sparkled with anecdote, and his criticisms were characterised by a severe and discriminating taste. He used to confess, that in his poetical compositions, he was far from being a Lord Fanny.* His verses were beaten rather than cast. A couplet often cost him considerable labour—some persons said, not unfrequently, a fortnight. This is, I think, sufficiently

* "Lord Fanny spins a thousand such a day."
POPE.

visible even in his first and most beautiful poem; and sometimes he seems to give up the task of completing his couplet in despair. For, at the opening of that exquisite piece, amidst the tranquil stillness of the village-green, and the dying sounds of a summer twilight, when the occupations and sports of the hamlet are alike hushed, is the following disconnected distich, which he seems, by every effort of joinery, to have vainly attempted to force together :—

"All, all are fled, yet still I linger here—
What pensive sweets this peaceful spot endear!"

Even then it was the fashion to liken the pale visage of the poet to all sorts of funereal things—*Tristissima mortis imago!* But Ward's (now Lord Dudley) were the most felicitous resemblances. Rogers had been at Spa, and was telling Ward that the place was so full, that he could no so much as find a bed to lie in, and that he was obliged, on that account, to leave it. "Dear me," replied Ward, "was there no room in the *church-yard?*"

At another time, Murray was showing him a portrait of Rogers, observing, that "it was done to the *life*." "To the *death*, you mean," replied Ward. Amongst other amusing sallies of the same kind, was his asking Rogers—"Why don't you keep your hearse, Rogers?—you can well afford it."

I remember well, that Rogers, just after the publication of his "Pleasures of Memory," had received, from some powerful but unknown hand, some elegant stanzas on the subject of the poem, but selecting only topics of unpleasing and mournful retrospect. One stanza, he particularly admired, and repeated it to us:—

"To me, she tells of bliss for ever lost;
Of fair occasions, gone for ever by;
Of hopes too fondly nursed, too rudely crossed;
Of many a cause to wish—yet fear to die."

These lines he considered almost perfect, and wished very anxiously to know the author. This opportunity was afterwards presented to him at the King of Clubs. It was a Mr. Soames, a

young man of great promise, formerly at Cambridge. He afterwards entered the army, and died in India, Lieutenant of His Majesty's 25th Dragoons.

If these recollections, in which candour will not demand a regular series or continuity, or any thing more than a miscellaneous groupe of shadows, like those evoked by the Sybil in Virgil, (though I must not say with her, *explebo numerum*, for the catalogue is inexhaustible, and might be lengthened to many volumes); if these recollections have been laborious to peruse, they have not been less laborious to trace. Many have been sought for through the mist of intervening years, or roused from their burial-places in the memory, which has rendered them up with reluctance. The portraitures, however, will be found in the main tolerably correct. Being sketched at a close, perhaps too close a proximity to the characters themselves, some of them who are high in rank, and high in public estimation, may have lost some of the effect which distance lends to great and elevated objects. They have

been taken too in their undress attire, in the carelessness of the social hour; in short, amidst the unrestrained ease and familiarity of the Club. They are a part, at least, of an experiment to arrest and delineate the humours of the national character, which is never seen, in its native and unmixed form, better than in these friendly corporations. And these little corporations are, characteristically, British; for, I have seen many countries, and conversed with many travellers, and I have never heard that, out of this island, they have been carried on in the same spirit, or founded upon the same principle. In Germany, besides the collateral purpose of smoking, they would be dedicated to one specific end. Where they consisted of literary men, discussions on transcendental metaphysics would raise a cloud as dense as their pipes. They would never (an essential requisite in our Clubs)

"Let Euclid rest or Archimedes pause."

And, in France, the appetite of our agreeable neighbours for change, to whom sameness is torture, and who always are fatigued out of exist-

ence, except whilst they are treading a ceaseless round of amusement, the perpetual recurrence of the same faces, in the same circle, however diversified the converse, or the topics, would be intolerable dulness.

THE END.

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